The FRESHMAN

Based upon
HAROLD LLOYD'S COMEDY

RUSSELL HOLMAN

A Harold Lloyd Corp. Production—A Pathé Picture. *The Freshman.*

THE SERVICE AT HAROLD'S BOARDING HOUSE WAS WONDERFUL.

THE FRESHMAN

NOVELIZED BY

RUSSELL HOLMAN

Based upon the great comedy
starring

HAROLD LLOYD

Produced by the Harold Lloyd Corporation
Directed by Sam Taylor and Fred Newmeyer
A Pathé Release

GROSSET & DUNLAP
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Made in the United States of America

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TO

HAROLD LLOYD

WHOSE GENIUS MAKES "THE FRESHMAN" LIVE UPON THE SCREEN MORE VIVIDLY THAN ONE COULD HOPE TO CATCH HIM BETWEEN THE COVERS OF A BOOK; AND OF WHOM WILL H. HAYS SO TRUTHFULLY SAID: "HE COULDN'T MAKE ANYTHING BUT FINE, WHOLESOME PICTURES IF HE WOULD; AND HE WOULDN'T IF HE COULD."

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

FULL credit for "The Freshman" story should go to Harold Lloyd and to the members of his very efficient staff: namely, Sam Taylor, Fred Newmeyer, John Grey, Ted Wilde, Tim Whelan and Clyde Bruckman. They originated the plot and developed it in its every detail. The undersigned author did not appear upon the scene until the great comedy motion picture, produced from their story, had been completed and shown. He then endeavored to translate the photoplay into book form, using the incidents of the story exactly as they occur upon the screen.

The undersigned freely acknowledges his indebtedness to Mr. Lloyd and his famous staff as the real authors of "The Freshman." He is likewise grateful to the Harold Lloyd Corporation for permission to novelize the picture.

RUSSELL HOLMAN.

SOUND BEACH, CONN.,
September 8, 1925

THE FRESHMAN

CHAPTER I

Brack ko-ak, brack ko-ak,
Whee-e-e-e, wham;
Chop suey, chop suey;
Tate! Tate! Tate!

THE shrill war cry, flung into the autumn air by thirty thousand loyal Tate throats, thundered across the gridiron streaked by the late afternoon shadows. Down on that lime-marked battlefield the old traditional rivals, Tate and Union State, were fighting out their annual battle. And though the cheers of the Tate cohorts were as voluminous and shrill as they had been at the start of the game, hope burned low in the hearts of the Red and White supporters. For it was the fourth quarter, there remained but three minutes to play, and the scoreboard heralded the dire tidings—Union State 3, Tate 0.

Truth to tell, the germ of discouragement was eating at the spirits of the Tate team also. Battling valiantly for two hours against the

superior weight and strength of their time-honored adversaries, they had kept down the score, but had been unable even to threaten the Union State goal line. With the game nearly over, they were becoming resigned to defeat. That is, ten of them were. Good old "Speedy" Lamb, captain and fullback, would never acknowledge that his beloved alma mater was beaten. No, never—not until the last whistle blew.

The only man able to gain against the strong Union State line, Lamb had been virtually the whole Tate team. Encouraging his men, carrying the ball on two out of every three downs that it was in Tate's possession, he had been a firebrand, the fly in the Union State ointment, an inspiration to his fellows, a tower of strength. Even now, his whole body battered and bruised, a crimson-stained bandage around his forehead, he danced behind his crouching linemen, slapping backs, shouting words of cheer. "Hold 'em, you huskies," he cried, "for Good Old Tate."

And well "Speedy" might admonish them, for the ball was but two yards from the Red and White goal posts and Union State's long-delayed touchdown seemed imminent. For an instant a deep silence filled the huge Tate stadium. Then the Union State quarterback barked his signals. The ball passed. A rasp

of canvas, the thud of human bodies meeting as both lines charged and a Union State halfback, head down, catapulted into the mêlée off left tackle. Suddenly there was a sharp cry. The halfback had fumbled! Out of the heap of struggling bodies trickled the elusive pigskin and bobbed about crazily on the brown turf.

Ah, who was this leaping from the pile, scooping the ball up with a deft lowering of the arms, without slackening his speed an instant? Who other than "Speedy" Lamb himself! And down he swung—down the field with the speed of an express train, straight-arming the lone Union State tackler who attempted to bar his flight. The Tate section of the grandstand sprang to its collective feet, shrieking like madmen. On down the field flew "Speedy," the whole Union State team now in wild pursuit behind him. On and on he drove his tired legs. Past the middle of the field. Past the Union State twenty-yard line. He could hear the pounding of another pair of legs close behind him, could almost feel the hot breath of the foremost pursuer upon his neck. With a last desperate effort he summoned forth a final burst of speed. Five yards from "Speedy's" haven, the Union State quarterback flung himself through the air and, with a marvelous flying tackle, man-

aged to hurl "Speedy" to earth. But, alas, for the hopes of Union State, too late!

For, as Lamb fell, he stretched out the ball at full arm's length ahead of him and he could feel the lime of the goal line in his teeth. And though all eleven men of the Union State team were now piled upon him, he smiled. The referee, demolishing the human pyre, confirmed "Speedy's" optimism. The ball was six inches over the line. Tate had won! Pandemonium broke loose in the Tate stands. "Speedy's" teammates pounded his back and danced for joy. If there had ever been any doubt as to who was the most popular man in college, it was forever dispelled now. Even the famous Chester Trask had never accomplished a herculean deed like this.

What matter if there was not enough time left to try for the goal after the touchdown? Did not the scoreboard now read Tate 6, Union State 3? As the final whistle blew, the hordes of Tate rooters swarmed down upon the field. The historic snake dance got under way. Hats enough to equip an army were flung over the goal posts. "Speedy" was borne aloft upon a score of willing shoulders. "Hurray for 'Speedy'! Good Old 'Speedy'! Hurray!"

Hardly had the cheers started to die down when the scene shifted.

It was the last half of the ninth inning in the annual baseball game between Tate and their historic adversary, Union State. The score, as the forty thousand spectators could read upon the board out in left field, was Union State 3, Tate 0. And two Tate batsmen were already out. Yet, as the followers of Good Old Tate gazed out upon the hard-fought diamond, there was still a little hope in their hearts. For three Red and White runners were on the bases, and none other than "Speedy" Lamb was striding to the plate, swinging three bats as he strode.

"Get hold of one, Lamb. Save the day for your alma mater," the coach begged the hardest hitter in the intercollegiate ranks as the latter was selecting his bat. "We're relying on you, 'Speedy.' It's for Good Old Tate," the manager of the team said hoarsely.

Now the noted slugger stood at the plate gracefully, confidently. The Union State pitcher, who had held the Tate batters in the hollow of his hand all through the game, now realized that he had an opponent worthy of his steel. He wound up with the utmost care. The Tate runners were poised at their bases, eager to be off at the crack of the bat. The white ball whizzed toward the plate. "Strike One!" the umpire yelled. "Speedy" Lamb permitted a confident smile to flood his face,

though he had not taken the bat from his shoulder. The ball had been six inches outside of the plate, but "Speedy" had never been one to dispute with umpires.

There came then two obviously bad balls in succession, followed by another strike, a wicked outshoot at which Lamb swung with all the force of his broad shoulders and brawny arms, and missed by an eyelash. The destiny of Tate University hinged upon the next two pitches!

His trained baseball mind sensing that the pitcher would now probably waste one, the crack slugger let the next ball pass. And, confirming his judgment, the umpire shouted "Ball Three!" Three balls and two strikes!

Forty thousand hearts were stilled as the pitcher prepared for the crucial toss. He went through his preliminary motions with meticulous care. The runners were away from their bases with the movement of his arm. The ball streaked toward the big mit of the Union State catcher with blinding speed. But it never reached its destination. For the trusty bat of "Speedy" Lamb swung true and clean. There was a sharp crack. A wild yell rose from the grandstand. All three Union State outfielders raced back. But in vain. The hit was labeled "home run" as it left "Speedy's" bat. It was the stoutest blow

ever struck on the Tate grounds. The three Tate runners raced across the plate. As Lamb, his head modestly lowered, followed, the Tate supporters were already out in the field. Fifty eager pairs of arms reached for him. The historic snake dance formed, Lamb riding precariously amid it all. And the scoreboard read Tate 4, Union State 3.

But, after all, it was in still another rôle that "Speedy" Lamb preferred himself. A rôle in which he could do no less heroic labors for Good Old Tate than as football or baseball hero. For had not the Tate "Tattler" carried the account of the mass meeting at which Chester Trask, captain of the football and baseball teams, had said, "You cheer leaders, you fellows in the cheering section, can do as much toward beating Union State as we eleven men down there on the field. You'll be fighting for Good Old Tate when you're yelling your heads off up there in the stands. It's put new courage in the team, I can tell you, to sit up here and listen to the way you've cheered and sung to-night. Do the same thing next Saturday, fellows. Yell for Good Old Tate. We'll hear you down there."

So "Speedy" Lamb, wearing a big white turtle-neck sweater with an enormous red "T" sewed upon the chest, clutched his megaphone

down there in front of thirty thousand Tate rooters in the huge Tate stadium and shouted, "Now altogether, fellows, for the team yell. And make it a good one! They need you now if they never did before. Are you rea-a-dy? Hip! Hi-i-ip!" And he hurled down his megaphone and leaped into an imitation of a stage contortionist attacked by hysteria.

He skipped madly first to one side and then to the other. He bent, whirled and jerked his long body into all sorts of incredible postures. He flung clenched fists into the air with violent forward, backward, downward, upward, sideways and circular movements.

He felt the thrill of the great mob responding to his labors. From thirty thousand hoarse Tate throats he could hear the battle cry:

Brack ko-ak, brack ko-ak,
Whee-e-e-e, wham;
Chop suey, chop suey;
Tate! Tate! Ta-a-ate!

At the last shrieked "Ta-a-ate!" he sprang high into the air, flinging his arms far apart. Harold Lamb, breathing hard from his efforts, sat down and smiled.

He was proud of himself. He was the best

cheer leader old Tate had ever had. Before his day no white-flanneled exhorter to mass bronchitis had, for instance, ever been able to turn three complete cartwheels and then a forward somersault while leading the famous "long cheer" and keep the cadence perfectly. No former master of the megaphone had ever stimulated such volume from a cheering section singing the historic Tate alma mater song, "Tate Forever More."

Sitting there, Lamb smiled and fell into a blissful reverie.

His thoughts were brusquely interrupted as the door was pushed open and a pair of pinch glasses, riding a long nose, followed by a wrathful elderly face and a lanky body confronted him.

"What in thunder's all this noise up here?" came the irritated accents of the intruder at the door. "I thought you went to bed, Harold. What are you doing waking all the neighbors with that fool college cheering? What's this 'chop suey, chop suey' business, anyway? Gosh, I was listening in on the radio and I says to mamma, says I, 'Gosh, I've got China.' You must be crazy! I can't make you out these days, Harold. Getting out of bed and putting on that thick white sweater this hot weather and that fool little cap and cutting up such capers in front of the

mirror. It's a wonder you didn't knock all the plaster down in the living room. Now, you take that regalia right off and get back into bed and keep quiet."

And so let us abandon for the nonce the make-believe and see our hero as he really is.

Not in any collegiate setting do we find Harold "Speedy" Lamb. Cridiron, diamond and cheer leader's megaphone exist purely in his imagination. Tate University is in reality a thousand or more miles away. And "Speedy" is just a country boy playing, in grim earnest, to be sure, the rôle of college leader in front of the mirror in his bedroom.

Aroused by the racket over his head, Henry Lamb, Harold's father, had abandoned listening to his radio in the living room and had clumped upstairs to ascertain the reason for the disturbance.

But Harold Lamb was, for the moment, neither subdued by his father's stern outburst nor ready quite yet to abandon the rôle of "Speedy." Clad in white turtle-neck sweater and Freshman cap, wearing the sailor-wide trousers that were all the rage in collegiate circles, he approached his irate parent briskly and with a smile upon his face. When quite near the amazed Henry Lamb, Harold paused, executed a peculiar jig step, struck an attitude, held out his hand, and tossed off

this bon mot snappily, "I'm just a regular fellow. Step right up and call me 'Speedy,' dad." It was the first time he had had a chance to try out the favorite salutation of his new hero, Lester Laurel, whom he had seen that very evening in "The College Hero" —"The Screen Epic Glorifying the American College Man," at Sanford's leading motion picture emporium, Horowitz's Palace.

But Harold's parent did not accept the offer to shake hands. He acknowledged the strange salutation by opening his mouth in fresh amazement and by staring at his son blankly over his gold-rimmed glasses.

Then Henry Lamb found voice. "What's this nonsense now, hey? More of this college craziness?"

"Why, I saw it in the movies, dad," Harold explained eagerly. "Lester Laurel does it in that college picture every time he is introduced to anybody. I've been practicing it ever since. I bet it would make a hit in any college."

"I bet they would fire you out if you did it," retorted Henry Lamb. "I don't know what to make of you, Harold. I'll be glad when you get settled down in Cleveland working for your Uncle Peter."

Harold dropped his pose and took up the plaintive protest that had been annoying his

father for the past six months. "But I've told you a hundred times, dad, that I didn't want to work in the bank this Summer. I want to sell washing machines again and earn money to go to college. And I've told you I don't want to go to work for Uncle Peter. I don't want to spend the rest of my life making drop forgings. I want to go to college, to be a well-rounded individual ready to assume his proper place as a citizen of this great world of ours. I want to form associations in four glorious carefree years of my youth that will be more precious in the time to come than great riches. I want—"

But how could workaday Henry Lamb, bookkeeper for the First National Bank of Sanford, be expected to appreciate and agree with the words of Dean Pennypacker's baccalaureate sermon just delivered at the Tate commencement exercises and now quoted by Harold as if they represented the sum of the ages' wisdom?

Henry Lamb retorted testily, "Now, look here, Harold, just you put up that ball bat and that football and take off those fool clothes. Go right back to bed this instant. There's been enough complaint at the bank about your work already without tiring yourself out nights with this traipsing around. Just remember this—you ain't got any more

chance of ever getting to college than I have of being president of the First National Bank."

A glance at the ineffectual face and bent shoulders of Henry Lamb, for twenty years occupant of the same high stool behind the bars of the First National, would have convinced one that Harold's chances of emulating the famous Lester Laurel or Chester Trask were very slim indeed.

But the elder Lamb's outburst had brought Harold's soaring imagination back to earth. When the carpet-slippered radio listener had shuffled out of the room, his son slumped dejectedly upon the bed and began slowly pulling off the big white sweater. Gone now the vision of himself as Tate's greatest son. Gone now the scenes of triumph on football and baseball field and as cheer leader extraordinary, just enacted by him, with the aid of one football, one baseball bat and one battered megaphone and one extremely vivid imagination, in front of his bedroom dresser mirror. He had acted them very well, with intricate and exact pantomime, thanks to plenty of practice before this same mirror and to his recent view of Lester Laurel in "The College Hero"—so well that he seemed actually to have felt the groping Union State tackler's hands around his ankles, to have experienced

the tingle of well-directed bat against ball, to have heard the "ko-ak ko-ak" of the Tate battle cry.

But now he was just Harold Lamb, graduate a week since of Sanford High School, temporarily a clerk in the First National Bank of Sanford. Doomed in a month to begin a business career of doubtful destiny in the drop-forging foundry of his rich Uncle Peter Thatcher, in Cleveland. It was very sad.

Having finished removing his sweater, Harold lay moodily down upon his bed. But not to sleep. Even if Morpheus had been paged, that soothing god would have discovered too much external opposition. It was a hot muggy night and not yet nine o'clock. Harold's strategy in retiring to the privacy of his bedroom with the announced intention to his father and mother of going right to bed was proving, now that the purpose of his early retirement had been frustrated by the elder Lamb, a source of extreme discomfort. In the neighboring yard a hose swished and a baby cried. Under the arc light in front of the Lamb house youngsters were noisily busy at "kick the stick." In the living room under him, a penetrating nasal voice from Cleveland was twanging pearls of wisdom through Henry Lamb's loud speaker on "Bank

Failures, Their Causes and Remedies," mingled with static cat-calls and yowls.

At length Harold rose, procured from his dresser top a book with an ornate black and gold cover, switched on the light beside his pillow and sat up in bed to read. The book was the property of Harlow Gaines, principal of the Sanford High School, a Tate man. The gold embossing upon its black cover was somewhat worn, but it still read "Tate Year Book. 1914." Harold knew its pages by heart, though he now turned them again almost reverently. He surveyed the stern visage of Amos Pennypacker, '82, D.D., A.B., M.A., Ph.D., D.S., Dean of the University. He glanced at the group pictures of the four undergraduate classes, most of the members wearing the Hindenburg pompadours and tight trousers fashionable ten years ago. Then he leafed the pages further, into the beatific regions of football captains resting with artificial nonchalance upon the step of the historic Tate sundial where only captains could rest. Swimming teams striving not to betray that the photographer's studio was rather breezy for their abbreviated costumes. Stirring scenes, slightly out of focus, from athletic contests indulged in by the Tate cohorts during 1913-14.

Further back in this golden chronicle, Har-

old came once more upon the editorial board of the Tate "Tattler," eight sober youths looking as editorial as possible, and spotted the Harlow Gaines of a decade back, spectacled and over-supplied with hair. Thence to the glee and mandolin clubs, stiff in dress suits. And to the cherubic society slickers of the Junior Promenade committee. He read for the fifteenth time the account of the show, "The Duchess of Dreams," produced that year by the Sock and Buskin Club, and scanned the illustrations of undersized undergraduates dresssd to impersonate girls and looking precisely like undersized undergraduates dressed to impersonate girls.

Harold closed the book with a sigh. Harlow Gaines was a lucky man. Harlow Gaines had lived. Outside the hose still swished and the children shouted and the twangy voice from Cleveland still discoursed on "Bank Failures."

Harold got up, replaced the book upon his dresser, and, opening a drawer, drew out four well-thumbed copies of a four-page newspaper. Returning to his bed, he turned the hot pillow over and resumed his sitting posture, opening the first of the newspapers upon his lap. It was the Tate "Tattler" dated but a month ago.

A stalwart, well-groomed youth in a foot-

ball suit smiled out at Harold from the first page. The legend under the picture read, "Chester Trask, varsity football captain. Yesterday voted the most popular Junior in college." Harold re-read the story of Chester's exploits accompanying the photograph. He re-read the whole paper, word for word, not excepting the column headed "University Notices" and containing such intriguing items as: "University Baseball; Following men report at the station at 2 for Union State trip: Crew, Castles, Rhoades, Post, Thorne, Tracy, Dodge, Cluett, Low, Woolsey, Cliff, Blythe, Coach McIntyre, Manager Mudge." "Chemistry 2B. Professor Tobey will be unable to meet his classes to-day." "Social Psychology 4A. Report at station at 3 for trip to State Asylum." Nor did he miss the advertisements, containing such lures as "Cheap George. He buys the Students' Furniture and Clothes. Cash." "University Laundry. We keep the dirt and you keep the shirt." "Skokie's Spring St. Smokery. Select Smoke Supplies for Students."

When at last the hose and the children and the bank expert from Cleveland had hushed their din, the four well-thumbed copies of the Tate "Tattler" had slid down upon the floor. Harold Lamb had slid down in his bed. Harold was quite asleep, dreaming of meeting

Professor Tobey and "Cheap" George on the station platform at 2 with clean shirts and smokes for the baseball team that was to play Union State at the State Insane Asylum.

And down in the living room, Henry Lamb, the best bookkeeper in the county and the worst radio liar in the state, was trying to get Los Angeles. But a thunderstorm was in the air. And though the second story of the Lamb house was now silent as a tomb, Henry could get nothing but cat-calls and guttural rumblings through his ear phones. Finally he took off the hearing apparatus and closed the machine for the night.

"I don't know where Harold got those crazy notions about going to college," remarked Henry to the patiently knitting Mrs. Lamb. "Goodness knows, I've done all *I* can to discourage him."

Mrs. Lamb, lifting patient blue eyes that were surprisingly like Harold's, answered quietly, "It does seem a shame that he can't go." On an impulse she put her hand into her knitting basket and produced a worn bank book. "See, Henry," she urged, "he has saved all this money he earned selling washing machines the last three summers to take to college for spending money. It's $485. It *is* too bad he can't go. Every evening he sits up in his room dreaming about going to col-

lege. He simply can't think of anything else."

Henry Lamb made an uncertain gesture that was intended to indicate a strong man whose patience is about to blow up.

"Gosh, you ain't backing him up in this idea, are you?" Henry cried plaintively. "You know we haven't the money to send him. Besides, I don't believe in colleges. Harold's lucky to be able to finish high school. Most boys his age in this town have been working four or five years already. Harold had just better get over this notion."

Henry Lamb sniffed. He did more. He delivered himself of an opinion formed from his recent amazed vision of Harold in sweater and cap leading cheers in front of his mirror.

Henry said slowly, "And if by some miracle Harold ever did get to college and imitated that movie actor, they'd either break his heart or his neck!"

CHAPTER II

DO you remember those boyhood days when going to college was greater than going to Congress—and you'd rather be right tackle than President?

Harold's ambition to go to college had taken definite form one raw March afternoon five months before that Summer night he play-acted in front of his mirror. He had had thoughts of college before, but they had been fleeting, discouraged by his knowledge of the Lamb finances and of his father's oft-repeated opinion of the mental and moral competence of the products of our universities. Henry Lamb's opinion, to be sure, was based upon the performances of Walter Coburn, Jr., Union State '26 and son of the president of the First National Bank of Sanford. This was hardly giving our colleges an even break. Walter, Jr., spent his summers supposedly learning the banking business at the First National, at times under the tutelage of Henry Lamb. In reality Walter spent his summers driving a high-powered motor car between Sanford and fashionable resorts near by and reported for duty at the bank, sleepy

and sulking, only after ultimatums from his self-made and apoplectic father.

On Harold Lamb's crucial March afternoon, Harlow Gaines, principal and chief professor in the Sanford High School, asked Harold to remain for a few minutes after the class in Senior English.

Gaines was thirty-two years of age and looked ten years older. He wore gold-rimmed eyeglasses with a black cord fastened to them. A lock of blond hair drooped over his forehead. From the cradle he was destined to be principal of a four-room high school in a middle western town of the size of Sanford. He taught English, Latin, French, German, physics, and chemistry; he also coached the baseball and football teams. This latter task he performed very badly, for he had played neither game himself. But the other two teachers in the Sanford High School were women, so Gaines got the coaching assignment.

He boarded with the Picketts, two houses from the school. Mrs. Pickett reported that Gaines spent all his spare time and cash on thick, depressing-looking books, some of them not even in English, and was hence "a very smart man." To corroborate this, Professor Gaines never spoke in words of one syllable when three syllables would do just as well.

Moreover, to counterbalance the unimpressive appearance of his small, thin-chested body, he had cultivated a very deep voice. New acquaintances hearing this voice for the first time always visibly started, as if they had suddenly heard a rabbit roar like a lion.

Professor Gaines, tapping his gold-rimmed glasses upon his desk, jerked his nervous little head up toward the tall, awkward Harold and said gruffly, "Lamb, I wished to make a private comment upon the essay which you turned in to-day. While it was not devoid of errors in grammar and in syntactical construction, it was a decidedly creditable effort, decidedly creditable. I may safely say that it was noticeably above the average of the class. But what I desired to make special comment upon was the subject which you discussed. I believe that in the questionnaire which I had the class fill out last week you stated that you did not intend to pursue your education beyond the high-school grade, that you did not contemplate entering a university. Is that correct?"

Harold nodded.

"Yes," went on the principal with considerable satisfaction that his memory had not played pranks with him, "I was convinced I was correct in my impression. May I say then that it is all the more remarkable that you

should have chosen 'The Advantages of a College Education' as the subject of your essay and, moreover, betrayed in the effective manner in which you presented your thesis that you are quite convinced of the benefits to be derived from colleges. You have evidently given the matter considerable thought."

Harold thought that through the barrage of sonorously mouthed big words he gleaned Gaines' meaning. He replied, "If you mean that I want to go to college, I do, you bet I do."

Gaines hesitated. Then he asked, "If you will permit me, may I ask if the obstacle thwarting your desire is of a financial character? For lack of pecuniary means is not necessarily a bar to a college education, you know. I, myself, for instance, worked my way through all four years at Tate University and was neither hampered in my educational pursuits nor looked down upon by my fellows."

"Money is one reason I can't go," Harold said frankly. "Another reason is that my father doesn't believe in colleges. He has arranged with my Uncle Peter Thatcher to have me go to work at the Thatcher Steel Works in Cleveland in the fall. Dad says the best education is gotten in the hard school of experience. That's where he got his."

Professor Gaines said, "H'mm," with the

suspicion of a sniff. He added, "Perhaps I could interview your father and convince him differently."

Harold knew Henry Lamb's opinion of the town highbrow. The youth said doubtfully, "I don't think it would do any good."

"My specific motive in bringing up this matter," Gaines continued resoundingly, "is that there is a smoker and get-together of the Ohio alumni branch of Tate University in Cleveland to-morrow evening. I have been urged to bring with me any members of my graduating class who might be interested in my alma mater. The alumni association will pay the traveling expenses of such guests. I regret that one of the requirements is that the high school or preparatory school students thus invited shall possess outstanding athletic prowess. I may say that I do not at all approve the tendency of our colleges proselytizing prospective entering men with athletic ability. However, I believe that you would meet even this regrettable requirement. You have acquitted yourself adequately upon the baseball and football teams here. I dare say I shall be justified in extending to you an invitation to accompany me to Cleveland to-morrow afternoon, if you would care to come and if you can secure your parents' permission. You will there meet several prominent Tate

alumni, as well as the undergraduate captains of the football and baseball team. There will be speeches, a banquet and other entertainment."

Professor Gaines delivered the invitation as if it were to a presentation at the Court of St. James. And Harold regarded it in no less a light. The high school senior beamed.

He almost stuttered with excitement as he replied, "Say—that would be great! Thanks a lot. I'll ask my dad right away. He'll let me go, I'm sure, when he hears my expenses will be paid."

Sure enough. Henry Lamb grumbled, but he finally guessed it would be all right, "seeing that they're fools enough to pay your way. But don't come back here all heated up again about going to college. College is only for rich nincompoops like young Walt Coburn and half-baked bookworms like your Harlow Gaines, P.D.Q., B.V.D., and eight or nine other useless letters."

Master and pupil left the railroad station at four o'clock the following afternoon. Harold was wearing his gray college-cut suit, the over-length and over-width trousers of which had occasioned much ribald comment from Lamb, Sr., and his gayest barber-shop striped necktie. He took his seat beside Professor Gaines in the train with an eager light

in his eyes like a Crusader embarking to join the army of Richard the Lionhearted. Gaines promptly pulled a well-thumbed copy of "Marius the Epicurean" from his pocket and buried his thin nose in it, ignoring his youthful guest. But Harold did not mind. He looked out of the window over the Ohio flats and imagined blissfully that he was actually starting out to enroll in the Freshman class at Tate.

From the smoky Cleveland station they took a trolley to the Public Library. Gaines explained that he was taking advantage of the excursion and the hour or so at his disposal before the dinner to do a little research work. Led by a mousy little assistant librarian, Harold and the savant burrowed into a musty, book-lined region of the library known as "the stacks." Gaines settled down with a heavy tome at a desk under a bad light and read diligently, stopping to scribble notes ever and anon in a dainty hand. Harold sat patiently near his guide. The boy regarded curiously the white-faced, stoop-shouldered attendants, flitting in and out among the books like wraiths, and wondered how human beings could endure in this close, hot atmosphere. Luckily he did not know that most of them were university graduates earning the munificent sum of fifteen dollars a week.

And then at seven o'clock they left the library, walked to the Hotel Stafford, and a portal of Paradise slid back.

The banquet was held in one of the private dining rooms of the palatial Stafford. Several of the banqueters were gathered about the cloakroom as they checked their wraps. They were, for the most part, boisterous and robust types, ranging from new graduates only four or five years older than Harold to distinguished-looking, Van Dyke-bearded gaffers. They were smoking, chattering, slapping each other on the back in an exceedingly informal manner.

As Professor Gaines divested himself of his coat, a resounding whack landed upon his back and his head bobbed around to meet the smiling red face and booming voice and extended paw of a husky man of about the principal's own age.

"Well, well, if it isn't 'Plugger' Gaines himself!" boomed the voice. "Taking a night off from the school-teaching game, eh? Good work! We missed you at reunion last June, 'Plugger.' What was the matter? Married or something? No? Well, the affair certainly needed the high moral tone you might have given it. Yes, sir, some of these boys deserved a little talking to at that 'titanic tenth,' as the committee so aptly called it.

'Titanic' was right. Say, if the 'Titanic' had had as much liquid to float in as we had, she'd never have sunk."

Professor Gaines frowned and interrupted by introducing the boisterous one to Harold. The name was James Shaw, and Harold decided that he must be the famous fullback, "Shock" Shaw, who had made the All-American by battering his way single-handed through the Union State line to an unexpected and glorious victory for Tate. "Shock" was now a little overgrown around the waistline, but was otherwise as good as new.

"Lamb's the name?" he inquired of Harold. "Good. Well, it'll be 'in like a Lamb and out like a lion' if you come to Good Old Tate, yes, sir. That's the way Tate shoves 'em through the melting pot, eh, 'Plugger'?" He spoke with simulated privacy to Harold, "'Plugger' here kinda shone in the gentler arts when he was in college. He won the long-distance Horace-translating all four years and he was the best little old bullfighter the debating team had. Play football, Mr. Lamb?"

The "Mister" from the famous "Shock" Shaw made Harold feel all warm inside. "A little," he ventured. Then, feeling that he should say something on behalf of his host,

he added, "Professor Gaines is our football coach at Sanford."

"What—'Plugger' coaching football?" Shaw suddenly roared. "Good night! Gainesey, old boy, you've been keeping something from us all these years. Next thing, you'll be telling me that Harlow is the town's champion dancer. Well, we certainly develop—we sure do. Meantime, let's go in, boys, to the big feed. 'Pep' Young, the chairman of the committee, tells me it's a wow."

They filed in toward the dining room, around the entrance of which another group of noisily chattering men of all ages were gathered. Shaw was enthusiastically greeted. Professor Gaines received a much milder salutation. The Sanford principal seemed a little out of place in this gathering, Harold could not help noting. It was being registered in Harold's eagerly absorbing mind that his mentor was hardly the typical Tate man. "Shock" Shaw, now, was different. Breezy, loquacious, back-slapping, broad-shouldered, popular, the redoubtable "Shock" was beginning to assume in the estimation of the high-school guest from Sanford the proportions of a hero.

But in the large, well-filled dining room other interests took Harold's attention. The

Tate cohorts were already nearly all seated around the long tables. At the piano in the corner, lounged a group of youths between eighteen and twenty-four, all equipped with various musical instruments. They were conversing among themselves, smoking, tuning their weapons, regarding the assemblage with that mixture of naïveté and boredom with which undergraduates always look upon the alumni. This was the Tate Student Jazz Orchestra, which the summer before had made a tour of Europe, playing in several London and Paris night clubs and before the King of Spain. Harold learned, with awe, that they had been brought all the way from the University especially for this affair.

Sprinkled among the alumni were various slickly clad youths of about Harold's age. Most of them, however, were of sturdier build than he, though just as wide-eyed. These were the preparatory school and high school guests of the alumni, prospective material for the athletic teams of Good Old Tate.

Harold's eager eyes shifted to the speaker's table. Beside the gray-bearded Cleveland banker whom "Shock" Shaw, from his seat on the other side of Harold, had pointed out as "Pep" Young, chairman and toastmaster, loomed a sleek black head and massive youthful body. Harold recalled the face under the

dark hair. It was Chester Trask's—Trask, the present athletic pride of Tate, football captain, the most popular man in college. Harold watched Trask smiling and talking to Chairman Young and wondered what gems of thought were passing between these Olympians. Also at the speaker's table were other huskies of Trask's age—other present Tate gods of the diamond, gridiron and cinder track. It was wonderful. Professor Harlow Gaines was almost in a total eclipse, forgotten.

Pinckney Parsons ("Pep") Young, arose, grinning and immaculate, and tapped his knife upon his plate for order.

"On behalf of the Ohio branch of the alumni association of Good Old Tate," drawled Chairman Young, amid a few irresponsible yells of "Atta boy, 'Pep,'" and "When do we eat?" from the rear of the crowded, smoke-filled room, "I wish to welcome to this festive board our honored guests and also my fellow-members of the alumni. I know you boys are hungry, so we will dispense with the speaking and other features until after the food has been served. Before we eat, however, I want to ask you all to stand and sing one verse of 'Tate Takes the Lead.' Will the undergraduate orchestra, which has journeyed so far for our pleasure, oblige?"

The undergraduate orchestra obliged by

crashing lustily into the opening bars of the famous Tate marching song. Harold stood with the rest and made desperate efforts to join in the ear-splitting din of masculine voices that filled the room. He was far from alone in not knowing the words of the anthem. There was a difference of opinion, evidently, among many of Tate's sons as to some of the phrasing. Nor had the exact tune remained intact in the musical memory of scores of Tatians. The close harmony portions were very sour. "Shock" Shaw, for instance, was endeavoring to sing baritone and was achieving a bass two keys too low. The shouting assemblage finished the song with a roar a stanza behind the orchestra and sat down.

Pinckney Parsons Young stood up again and said dryly, "Now, if those in conference in the anteroom will kindly clear up their business and join us, dinner will be served."

A group, grinning sheepishly, filed out from a closetlike room, adjoining the banquet hall, and took their places at the table. Their "business" seemed to have had something to do with metallic objects that they were now replacing in their hip pockets. It was a noticeable fact that, thereafter, most of the catcalling and interrupting of speakers was the handiwork of the late-comers from the anteroom.

Harold consumed the regulation Hotel Stafford banquet dinner without further incident. He hardly tasted the food. He was too excited.

When the demi-tasse had been served and the orchestra had finished playing the last of the popular songs that accompanied the food, Chairman Young tapped his coffee-cup with his spoon for attention.

"It is not often," declared Tate's leading banker, "that I am privileged to gaze upon such a representative gathering of sons of Good Old Tate. Before me I note, for instance, good old 'Shock' Shaw, representing the brawn of the Class of 1914, and near him, 'Plugger' Gaines, representing, if I may say so without deprecating the mental capacities of his fellows, the brains. Between them, if I am not mistaken, sits a typical specimen of the rising young manhood that will form the brawn and brains of the Tate classes of the future."

Harold suddenly felt himself blushing violently. Two hundred eyes seemed to be fastened upon him. He lowered his head, wishing himself a hundred miles away, back in Sanford. Then he got hold of himself, banished his blushes, raised his head. How he wished that Banker Young's words could come true! That he, Harold Lamb, could

become a son of Tate! An equal with "Shock" Shaw and Chester Trask. He was thrilled to the marrow by the very thought of it.

But the chairman had continued his remarks. He was on the point, Harold comprehended, of introducing "Chester Trask, one of the most distinguished, if not *the* most distinguished member of the present undergraduate body at Tate. Captain of the football team, chairman of the Junior Promenade committee, elected the most popular man at college. Gentlemen—Mr. Trask!"

Chester Trask arose easily and bestowed upon the company the frank, nonchalant smile that Harold had studied so minutely in the Tate "Tattler." As the applause gained in volume, the football leader thrust one hand into his pocket, wrote things on the tablecloth with his fork and lowered his eyes modestly. His clothes, Harold observed, did not follow the lines of the exaggerated models purchased by the Beau Brummels of Sanford High School from Klein's Kollege Klothes Emporium, on Main Street. They were of a more conservative hue, though the trousers were voluminously ballooned. At length the hand-clapping abated. The great young man was about to speak.

"I just want to say," Trask just wanted to say, "that we fellows now at Tate appreciate

what the backing of the alumni means to us. We know you're always behind us, not only cheering at the games, but trying to dig up good material for the teams, as shown by meetings like this and the one we attended on the way. I want to say that if the football team made good last Fall, it wasn't due to any effort of mine personally." (Shouts of "Oh, no!" "Atta boy, Trask!" and "How about that fifty-yard run?") "I also want to say that in Mike Cavendish Tate has got one of the greatest football coaches that ever lived. (Applause.) Some people may think that Mike is a little rough in his methods, but he's a square fellow and he gets results. I guess that's what we're all looking for. (Cries of "You said it!") Mike couldn't come along with us this trip, unfortunately.

"Maybe it will sound kind of bold for me to say so, but I want to say that I believe we will have next Fall one of the strongest teams that ever represented the university." (Exclamations of "That's the stuff!" and "Atta boy, Trask!") "This year is the last the Freshmen will be able to play on the team. Next year the intercollegiate agreement goes into effect, barring Freshmen. So all the good football material you alumni can get into the university this Fall can be used with good results. In conclusion, I want to introduce

one of the best football players that Tate has ever had, a member of the coaching staff last year and a fellow who did as much toward beating Union State as if he had played in the game—'Dusty' Rhoades, captain of the 1923 team."

Chester Trask gave a jerky nod in the best intercollegiate manner, clasped his two hands in front of him and shook them at his audience in a friendly gesture, smiled and sat down. Ecstatic applause ensued. "Pep" Young sprang up and suggested a "short cheer for Chester Trask," which was given boisterously. The orchestra played "Touchdown, Tate," and the gathering sang it a half key too low. When the din had subsided a bit, a short, chunky, red-haired youth arose. Harold, in the seventh heaven of delight, was thrilled anew. Not only was he seeing Chester Trask in the flesh, but before him blinked the previous Tate football king, "Dusty" Rhoades, elusive "Dusty" with the most highly educated straight-arm football had ever seen.

Strangely enough, the applause greeting "Dusty" was a trifle forced. The inside explanation of this was that Rhoades did not represent quite the correct traditions to be the perfect Tate hero. While Trask was a scion of one of America's best known and wealthiest

families and there had been Trasks at Tate since the Civil War, Rhoades came from obscure origins, had worked his way through college and was not even a fraternity man. Thus, though he had been a better football leader than Trask would ever be, he did not make the same appeal. He was even resented somewhat as an outsider. Without wasting any superfluous gestures, he made a straightforward speech and took his seat again amid mild acclaim and a perfunctory "short cheer." Harold, trying to enjoy one of the few cigarettes he had ever smoked, found himself conspicuous by the heartiness of his hand-clapping.

There followed a halting dissertation by the baseball captain on prospects for next year on the diamond. Then a fat, unctuously smiling man, "colyumist" on a Cleveland newspaper and a professional after-dinner speaker with no collegiate affiliations, made some humorous remarks about football and other sports, using material that Harold had already read in his "colyum," but laughed at nevertheless. There was more singing and jazzily rendered numbers by the undergraduate music-makers. But the formal part of the program was about over. The company had split up into little conversing, bantering groups.

"Shock" Shaw suddenly asked Harold, "Like to meet Trask and the boys?" And, without waiting for Harold's ecstatic "yes," led him up to the speaker's table, parked him in front of the great man and introduced him.

Chester Trask, holding court like a potentate, arose smiling and extended his hand, seizing Harold's hand and shaking it with the swift downward movement that was all the rage in the colleges.

"I didn't get the name," Trask apologized.

"Lamb," Harold ventured. "Harold Lamb." Worship shone in his eyes.

"One of the finest football players in the middle west," Shaw, who had been investigating the side show in the anteroom, added glibly.

"Good," Trask exclaimed. "We'll look for you out at football practice in the Fall."

Harold did not have the heart to say that he would look in vain. At that moment Harold would willingly have given his right arm to go to Tate, to associate with these undergraduate demigods, to be eligible later for assemblages of real he-men like this.

Then he was being presented to the less spectacular Rhoades, whom he somehow fancied even more than the redoubtable Trask. And to "Chick" Spencer, knight of the diamond. And to "Pep" Young.

Harold was considerably annoyed when, a few minutes later, Professor Gaines, who had been hovering in the background, came to him and said nervously, "We shall have to depart now, Lamb, if we are to catch the eleven o'clock train back to Sanford." So, "Shock" Shaw dissenting, the Sanford contingent left the party just as it was, as "Shock" expressed it, "getting nice and clubby."

They made the train with ease, having a fifteen-minute interval in the dull waiting room, during which Harold's excited mind reviewed the events of this most wonderful evening in his life while Professor Gaines read by himself from his little pocket edition.

On the train, the principal cleared his throat and asked punctiliously, "Well, Lamb, how have you enjoyed your contact with a collegiate assemblage?"

"It was wonderful!" Harold enthused at once. "They are fine fellows, every one of them. I only wish *I* could go to Tate."

"My only regret is that there was not a representative present from the educational side of the university," said Professor Gaines. "After all, that is the main raison d'être of a college. The athletics are merely the side show."

Harold nodded, without agreeing with him. A few minutes later Harold nodded for

another reason. He was falling asleep. When the train reached Sanford at about one-thirty in the morning, the absent-minded Gaines nearly disembarked without waking up his young charge.

CHAPTER III

HAROLD awoke the next morning still drowsy but with this thought resounding through his mind: Civilization's crowning achievement was a Tate-bred man and he would be one, or perish in the attempt.

At the breakfast table he endeavored to convey this mature reflection to his father, who was in a particularly unsympathetic mood owing to the fact that his coffee had been served to him in a tepid and unappetizing condition. After Harold had been seeking for five minutes or more to describe the marvelous and inspiring entertainment he had witnessed the previous evening, Henry Lamb turned upon him irascibly and snapped, "Now, looka here, Harold. I let you go to that fool thing, but don't talk to me about it! I ain't interested. Colleges ain't for folks like us. I don't purpose to have you waste four years of your life at one of them country clubs like Tate. And that's all there is to that."

Harold found, in the ensuing weeks, just two sympathetic souls to whom he might confide his ambition: Harlow Gaines and Mrs. Henry Lamb. Gaines pleased him inexpressibly by lending him the Tate Year Book for

1914, a volume which Harold consulted dutifully every night before retiring and often in the hours when he was supposed to be up in his room doing home work assigned by Gaines. Moreover, all the prep school students present at the Cleveland alumni gathering had been placed upon the subscription list for the Tate "Tattler." Harold looked forward to the coming of this scrubby little four-page newspaper as a frozen polar expedition keeps eyes peeled for the relief expedition from the South.

It was a picture in the "Tattler" that had led to the purchase of the turtle-necked white sweater. As the captain-elect of Tate's football forces, Chester Trask had been photographed resting nonchalantly upon the famous sundial sacred to the memory of Tate athletic leaders. The aristocratic body of Chester was encased in a huge and spotless high-necked sweater with a large block "T" upon the chest. Harold recalled that such a sweater was in the stock of Klein's Kollege Klothes Emporium, on Main Street, Sanford. For several days he hesitated, and then he took several dollars out of the store of his summer earnings. Entering the disorderly interior of Jacob Klein's store, Harold made inquiry about the sweater, which he had seen in the window a few weeks previously. The

short, bulbous-nosed proprietor produced it. Harold tried it on. It fit. He bought it and smuggled it past his parents up into the privacy of his bedroom. There in front of the mirror he again donned it. He smiled. He clasped his hands in front of him and shook them at an imaginary audience as Chester Trask had done. The result was quite satisfactory. Though somewhat more narrow of chest than Trask and handicapped a bit by the thick-lensed glasses he wore, Harold felt that he looked the rôle of the collegian perfectly.

One little detail had been neglected. Harold took a chance and appealed to his mother about this. After some grumbling, she consented to cut out a large red block "T" and sew it upon the sweater. Harold knew that no one who had not been received into the exalted ranks of a Tate varsity team was eligible to wear the coveted "T." But since he did not purpose to exhibit the insignia outside of his own chambers, there would be no harm. Some day, he eagerly told himself, he would go to Tate and earn the right to sport the coveted "T," just like Chester Trask!

As slushy March wore on into rainy April and thence into fragrant May, the subject of the hour in the Lamb household became the disposal of Harold after his graduation from

high school in June. Plans for the boy's future were fixed as far as Henry Lamb was concerned. He had ventured to approach Peter Thatcher, his brother-in-law regarding his son several months previously on the occasion of a trip to Cleveland. Peter, the steel magnate, had good-naturedly agreed to start Harold at the bottom in his foundry and give him a chance to make good. Henry Lamb thought this a very generous concession and a marvelous opportunity for his son. The older Lamb declined to be moved in the slightest by Harold's protests and by the boy's foolish ideas about going to college. Look at Uncle Peter! He had started as a water boy in a steel plant, and now he owned the business! One of the leading steel magnates of the country. Director in several banks. A leading citizen.

As June arrived, however, word came from Uncle Peter that business was in a slump, men were being laid off by the wholesale and he would be unable to use his nephew's services before the first of August at the earliest. This annoyed Henry Lamb only temporarily. He girded up his courage, approached Walter Coburn, president of the First National Bank of Sanford (where Henry was the oldest bookkeeper) and gained the boon of a minor clerkship for Harold during the Summer.

Whereupon the exasperating Harold countered by suggesting that he would rather go back to his old Summer job of selling washing machines!

Harold had been for the past three Summers Sanford agent for the Acme Washing Machine and had done rather well with it. Sanford was inhabited in great part by retired farmers and their families. The housewives were in most cases elderly ladies not quite ready to accede to the modern custom of sending out the family washes, but willing to listen to new-fangled schemes for easing their toil.

Harold canvassed the town thoroughly. He distributed the little Acme booklets, featuring the slogan, "It saves your back—or your money back," at every door. He was polite, nice-looking, eager and honest. He was quite willing to set up his sample Acme machine in a kitchen and give a practical demonstration of its capabilities. Elderly women instinctively liked him and bought his wares. Only when the daughters of his prospects answered the doorbells was Harold's selling talk impaired. He was very shy with young ladies.

Harold's commissions for the three Summers he had been selling washing machines were carefully deposited in the bank that em-

ployed his father. Mrs. Lamb kept the bank book. The deposits, as she had proudly shown Henry Lamb, amounted to $485. This money, earned by the honest sweat of his brow, Harold wistfully told himself was for use at college.

But Henry Lamb impatiently disposed of the washing machine idea for the present Summer. What Harold needed for his future work in Cleveland, Henry declared, was a grounding in finance. He would get him into the bank with him, where he, as an expert bookkeeper, could give his son the benefit of his long experience in money matters.

Henry spoke to Walter Coburn, of whom he was terribly afraid. The bank president grudgingly indicated his willingness to employ young Lamb.

"As long as my boy is coming to work here this Summer," growled Walter Coburn, "I suppose another beginner or so around won't do any harm. Tell him not to upset the inkwells or get in the way of the real workers."

Harold went to work the Monday morning following the memorable night when he received his High School diploma. He had hugged this valuable piece of parchment to his breast and tucked it safely away in the back of his bedroom dresser drawer. Harlow Gaines had told him that a diploma from

Sanford High School would admit him to Tate University without entrance examinations!

But he seemed very far from Tate when he walked into the drab First National that Monday morning and was assigned to a high stool near Henry Lamb.

Three weeks after Harold took up his unwilling and temporary labors at the bank, the president, a fat, fussy little man, waddled out of his private office one morning accompanied by a tall, dark, sulky-looking youth. The pair paused at Harold's stool and President Coburn frettily introduced the younger man as "my son, Walter Coburn, Jr." Knowing Walter, Jr., to be also a son of Union State, as well as of several other colleges from which he had been duly expelled, Harold favored him with the Chester Trask swooping handshake. It did not, however, get over very well. Walter, Jr., stared at him with his small, sleepy eyes as if Harold and his handshake were freaks. The shake of the president's son was very feeble, and he withdrew his white digits quickly as if afraid they would be maltreated. He muttered something that sounded like "pleeztameetcha," which he obviously wasn't.

Then the two Coburns passed on to the perch of Henry Lamb, where the bank of-

ficial explained that his son was to work beside the veteran bookkeeper for a while. The elder Coburn having departed, his heir climbed upon a stool and made vague motions with a pen for the rest of the morning, interrupting his arduous labors with three long-distance telephone calls to Cleveland. He showed surprising signs of life while speaking over the wire. He addressed the party at the other end as "Peaches."

In the middle of the afternoon, Harold summoned courage to approach the unsociable Walter, Jr., on the subject nearest to his heart. Henry Lamb had vacated his stool temporarily to transact some business in the teller's cage. Harold slid down to the floor and sauntered as carelessly as possible over to the other new clerk.

"Are you aiming to go into the banking business?" asked Harold amiably.

"Not if I can help it," grumbled Walter, quite evidently displeased at his father's employee's advances.

"I'm not either," Harold went on cheerfully. "I want to go to college. You're at Union State, aren't you? Is that a Phi Beta Kappa key on your vest?"

"Phi Beta? Heaven forbid! Say, do I look like one of those greasy bookworms?" Walter showed signs of being deeply insulted.

"Mr. Gaines, the principal at the high school, says a Phi Beta Kappa key is the highest honor you can win at college. He has one," Harold retorted.

"He must be a swell freak of nature then," Walter laughed unpleasantly.

To get even, Harold started on a new tack. "If I went to college," he said argumentatively, "I'd go to Tate."

Walter chuckled as if this were the most absurd statement of all. "Tate?" he snorted. "Say, I was there for six months and it's the last place the Lord made. Positively the worst excuse for a college in the world. Why, they don't even let the students own automobiles and they make 'em go to compulsory Sunday chapel. And classes as early as eight-thirty in the morning. Say, on the level, that joint's the limit. I couldn't stand it."

Walter neglected to state that feeling between Tate and himself had been mutual.

"Still they got some good teams. They beat Union State at football last Fall, 9 to 7."

"Yeh, that was a lucky break all right. This fellow Chester Trask grabbing up a fumble and running darned near the length of the field for a touchdown in the last quarter."

"I met Trask up in Cleveland last March,"

Harold rushed in to explain. "He's a peach, isn't he?"

"Where do you get that stuff? He's the biggest stiff in the intercollegiate world. Ask anybody. He's one fine pill. Why, they wouldn't have a guy like that at Union State. Wait till we get a crack at Chesty's team this Fall. We'll mop the earth up with 'em."

"I didn't know you played football," Harold suggested innocently.

"Not a chance. Say, I was going out for the team, but our fraternity doesn't figure this year. The Captain of Union State is a Psi Lambda, so none of us Phi Delts has got a chance. The fact is, I don't know that I'm going back to college in the Fall. But you can keep that under your straw kelly—see!" He cast a significant glance at Harold from under his slightly bloodshot brown eyes.

Harold retreated back to his stool convinced that there was little to be learned to the glory of the American college from Walter Coburn, Jr.

If he had been in the slightest dismayed by Walter's pessimistic account of the higher education, Harold's optimism came back with a rush a day or two later when the three billboards in Sanford blazed forth with advertisements of Lester Laurel in "The College Hero"—"Glorifying the American College

Man." Harold had heard of Lester Laurel. He was one of the leading motion picture stars of the day. Harold was delighted to find the famous Thespian lending his handsome face and distinguished talents to a film devoted to the higher education.

On one billboard he glimpsed the familiar Laurel face and form encased in a football uniform, including shin guards and nose mask, hurdling twenty-one prostrate gridiron warriors in direct violation of the present rules of the game. Another advertisement portrayed Lester with smiling face and extended hand of welcome. According to the caption on the poster, Lester was inviting, "I'm just a regular fellow. Step right up and call me 'Speedy.'" The third vivid billboard brought in the inevitable love interest. Lester, in a form-fitting dress suit, was standing with his arm around a beautiful damsel in evening dress, while at the feet of the famous star writhed an evil-looking, dress-suited chap who had evidently just been felled by the steely Laurel fist. The scene was seemingly a college dance, for pennants decorated the room and a jazz band was playing.

A date sheet attached to the advertisements announced that this educational epic was coming to Horowitz's Palace Theater for two days the week following. Harold resolved to go

at any cost. If Lester Laurel was the star, the picture was sure to be artistic and authentic in every way. For Harold had just read an interview with Mr. Laurel in "Screen Scrapbook," in which the lens luminary stated that it was his creed of art to present only the true and the beautiful, vigorously stamping out anything of the meretricious—anything that would not keep faith with his public. As if to confirm this, the press stories regarding "The College Hero" in the Sanford "Chronicle" stated that no efforts had been spared to make the picture "a true epic production of the American college, luxuriously produced and splendidly acted by Lester Laurel and a superb all-star cast of artists." The bulk of the scenes, the stories declared, had been photographed upon the campus of a well-known American college, with the undergraduates acting as extras.

His faith thus fortified, Harold was the first person in Horowitz's Palace Theater at the first show on the first evening of "The College Hero." To make sure of this distinction, he had bolted his supper, to the disgust of his father and mild protesting of his patient mother. Ten minutes after taking his seat in the theater, into which the rest of the audience was now straggling, he was feeling a slight distress in the region of his digestive organs.

However, he forgot this and other unimportant temporal matters when, after an hour's endurance of slapstick comedies, news reels and the tinpanny Horowitz automatic piano, the main title of the feature picture flashed on.

The first scene disclosed Lester Laurel, wearing a huge white sweater with a large block "Y" on it and bearing golf sticks, a tennis racket, a mandolin and a suitcase, in the act of alighting from the train to begin his career at Yates College. The attire of the hero was vaguely disturbing to Harold, for it struck him as a trifle immodest for an entering man. Moreover, Laurel looked some ten years older than a Freshman should, as did the crowd of students who rushed up the station platform to greet him. But these doubts passed as Harold gazed, fascinated, at the novel and refreshing manner in which Lester met the onslaught of the mob. Executing a neat little jig dancing step in front of the reception committee, Lester concluded by smiling, holding out his hand in friendly fashion and reciting, "I'm just a regular fellow. Step right up and call me 'Speedy.'" This, according to the sub-title flashing on the screen, captured all hearts at once, and "Speedy" quickly became the most popular man in college, slightly aided by the fact that he was a millionaire's son.

There followed in rapid succession scenes of action that held Harold enthralled. Scenes in the classroom, where the students all dressed in turtle-necked sweaters and performed katzenjammer tricks upon the professors. Scenes upon the football and baseball field, with "Speedy," impersonated by Lester Laurel, always the last-minute hero. There was, of course, a girl, the daughter of the university's president, a beautiful and very serene blonde. She was beloved by "Speedy." The college villain, the wretch who had tried to steal the football signals to sell to Yates' rivals and who had doctored "Speedy's" baseball bat to make it hit only foul balls, was the hero's rival in love. When Ethelda, for that was her name, refused the villain's advances, he locked her in a shack many miles from Poughkeepsie and the silvery Hudson, where the Yates crew, with "Speedy" as captain, was about to compete in the intercollegiate races.

Nothing was to be done, of course, save that "Speedy" must rescue the damsel in distress, at the risk of missing the race and losing it for his alma mater. For what was the Yates crew without "Speedy?" A Leviathan without its engine! So there were flashes from the villain striving to beat down the thin door that separated the fair Ethelda from his fiendish purposes to "Speedy" speeding to the rescue

in an incredibly high-powered roadster, and back and forth until Harold was ready to scream with excitement. But "Speedy," in his cute running pants and cutaway gym shirt, exposing his mighty torso, was fortunately in time. Ethelda was rushed into the car, the villain expunged by a blow of the Laurel fist. Then came the ride back to the starting point of the race, "the desperate, heart-breaking struggle against that inscrutable enemy—Time," as the sub-title put it, with a grouchy little figure of a scythe-bearing Father Time for a decoration. The referee had raised his gun aloft to bark out the starting signal when "Speedy" dashed breathlessly upon the scene. His seat in the Yates shell, strangely enough, was vacant. Yates was about to start the race with seven men, there being presumably not another undergraduate in the university capable of pulling an oar.

It was a bit confusing, but Harold forgot this minor criticism in the thrill of watching the race. The close-ups posed by the actors had been cleverly spliced with actual distant scenes of an intercollegiate race upon the Hudson. The result was a real triumph of the film-cutter's art. Harold was one with the rest of the audience in being duped. As the winning shell flashed down through the lane of gay launches and yachts and there fol-

lowed a near shot of the Yates boat, cheers arose from the delighted Sanford movie fans. Harold Lamb's voice was the loudest of all. The close-up showed that every oarsman in the Yates craft had collapsed after crossing the finishing line except "Speedy," who sat upright and smiling. Indeed he had enough energy in reserve to spring up and leap over upon the deck of the Yates president's yacht as it drew close and to clasp the fair Ethelda in his arms while "Prexy" beamed upon them through his beard.

Harold wandered out of Horowitz's Palace in a daze. It was all too wonderful to be true. College was even more of a Paradise than he had imagined. His determination was fixed. Life held nothing for him if he could not go to college.

He donned his white sweater and reenacted the rôle of "Speedy"—this time "Speedy" Lamb of Tate—in front of his mirror in the privacy of his bedroom. Only to be interrupted by his prosaic and unsympathetic father, as related in all too melancholy detail elsewhere in this volume. Following the unsatisfactory breakfast conversation with the elder Lamb the next morning, Harold formed a resolution. He would go to college anyway, whether his father liked it or not. Since money was the chief necessity for this

course of rebellion, he would get it elsewhere. Unfortunately Harlow Gaines had departed upon one of Chamberlain's Educational Tours of Europe for University Students and Professors—All Expenses, $234.75. Gaines might have told him how to get into Tate with the minimum of expense. Harold's own savings were far from enough. He must get money elsewhere. For several days he thought over this problem. Then an inspiration struck him. Why not borrow it from President Coburn, of the First National Bank? That executive had a son in college. He would be sympathetic to the idea.

Harold resolved to approach his employer with the view of a loan of $1,000, to be repaid in installments over a period of four years, in Summer labor at the bank.

The next morning he seized the opportunity when Henry Lamb was again busy in the teller's cage to knock upon the door of Walter Coburn's private office. The President's secretary, Harold noted, had departed temporarily from her sanctum and was conversing with two of the stenographers in the front office. The coast was clear. At the door of the President's room, Harold paused. Through the thick wood he had seemed to hear a voice ranting within. However, he told himself after a moment, nothing ven-

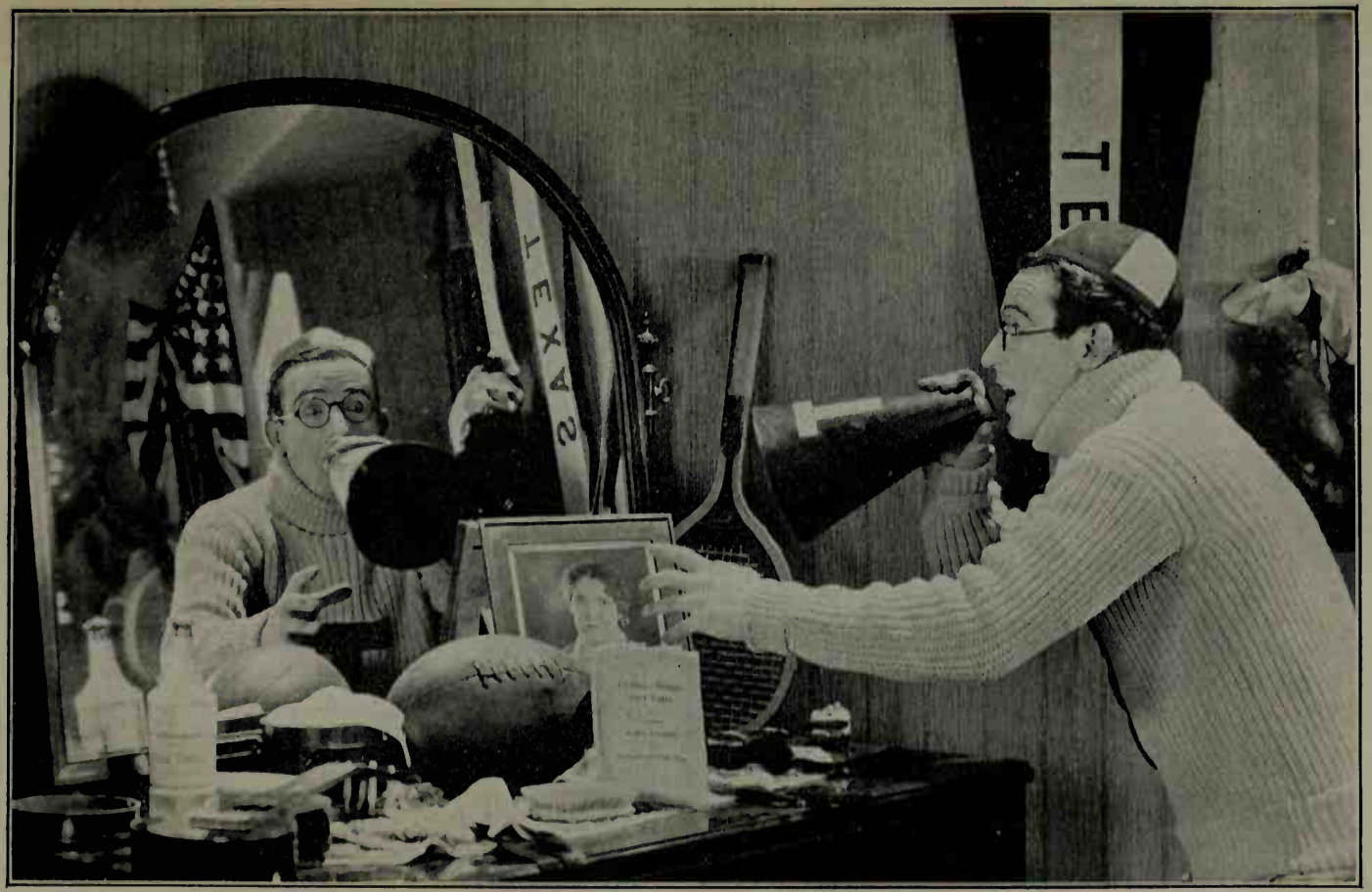
tured, nothing gained. Maybe the banker was merely talking over the telephone. He pushed open the door and walked in.

It was not before he had closed the door behind him that he turned to face this unexpected vision: President Coburn, very red of face and angry of mien, was pounding his desk and shouting in his loudest voice. Before the angry financier stood Walter, Jr., flushed and defiant. And beside Walter stood a petite, rouged, loudly dressed and very blonde young lady, a smile upon her coarsely pretty face that resembled somewhat a sneer. Her name was "Peaches" Pendleton, of the Olympia Burlesque Wheel, and Walter Coburn, Jr., had married her the night before in Cleveland.

The new Mrs. Coburn's father-in-law was in the act of telling her and her slightly frazzled-looking husband what he thought of them. He staunched the flow of his profanity for an instant at the sight of the newcomer. Harold hesitated, swallowed hard, made a motion to leave.

"Well, what do *you* want?" roared his employer.

Harold could think of nothing better to do, in his confusion, than to approach the desk and state his business. Mr. and Mrs. Walter,



A Harold Lloyd Corp. Production—A Pathé Picture. *The Freshman.*

"BRACK KO-AK, BRACK KO-AK, TATE ! TATE ! TATE !"

Jr., glad of the respite, watched him wonderingly.

"Mr. Coburn, sir," stammered Harold, "I came in to see you about the—er—possibility of a slight loan to enable me to go to college. I am—"

"College!" the elder Coburn snorted like two elephants at once. "College! You ought to go down on your knees and be thankful your father has sense enough not to send you to college. This young fool went to college —and now look at him! Sunk. Disgrace to his family. All through the ideas he got in college. College—pffhui! Now get out of here and don't come back! And if you ever mention the word 'college' to me again, I'll fire you and your whole family."

Harold left.

CHAPTER IV

CAME, as the sub-titles in "The College Hero" had succinctly put it, the first of August. Came, furthermore, the day on which Harold, having resigned his perch in the bookkeeping department of the First National, was to journey to Cleveland and interview his Uncle Peter Thatcher. Toward this interview he looked forward with about as much pleasure as a turkey awaits Thanksgiving.

However, since the debacle in the office of President Walter Coburn, Harold had become as resigned as he felt he ever would be to the prospect of never being able to enter the sacred portals of Good Old Tate. His future career would be devoted to drop forgings rather than drop kicks. And, though he might in time develop into a millionaire and sign magazine articles about how he did it and might break a hundred at golf, still, he gloomily assured himself, life would be but an empty shell.

Henry Lamb took a grudged fifteen minutes off from his toil that sweltering August morning to accompany Mrs. Lamb to the Sanford railroad station to watch their offspring de-

part for his entrance into the world of iron and steel. Harold carried a heavily loaded suitcase and many admonitions from his mother regarding his underwear. For the Lambs were not people to waste good carfare money and it had been agreed, if Uncle Peter assented, that Harold was to remain in Cleveland and go to work at once. So Mrs. Lamb wept a little as the train rolled into the station. And Henry Lamb had a difficult time looking cheerful, though he was helped by the satisfaction of, at last, seeing his son starting out upon a sensible enterprise rather than for some fool college. As for Harold, he looked the epitome of gloom. His forlornness was not assisted by the completely wilted collar he wore, a collar that had been straight as a guardsman when he left home, but which the early morning Ohio heat had already done for.

So the smoky local chugged out of the station bearing at least one passenger who looked as if he had just buried his best friend. As, indeed, perhaps he had, for what more cheerful comrades are there than the hopes and ambitions of youth?

Though he did not smoke, Harold decided that he might be excused for at least treating himself to the adventure of riding in the smoking car. He entered that stygian region

of haze and expectoration. Swinging his bulky suitcase up into the rack, he slumped into an empty seat and stared out of the window at the flat farming country flitting by. At length he summoned forth sufficient interest in his mundane surroundings to look about him. His exploration was almost at once rewarded, for a familiar bulk loomed in the seat across the aisle. The young man over there was smoking a bulldog pipe and reading a cowboy magazine. He wore the soft shirt with collar attached and the always-at-home air of the finished collegian. Harold did not have to look at him twice to assure himself that his carmate was none other than the famous "Dusty" Rhoades.

After some hesitation, Harold slid across the aisle and into the seat beside Tate's ex-football captain. Rhoades turned toward the newcomer, mild interest showing in his light blue eyes.

"You're Mr. Rhoades, aren't you?" Harold asked.

The celebrated athlete nodded.

"Well, I'm Harold Lamb," Harold pursued. "I met you at the alumni meeting at Cleveland last March, the one where you and Chester Trask spoke."

Rhoades remembered the meeting, if not Harold Lamb. They shook hands.

"Are you on your way to enter Tate now?" "Dusty" asked.

Harold shook his head.

"That's too bad," continued Tate's distinguished alumnus. "If you were, we could travel all the way together. I'm on my way to take up my job with the football coaching staff. What happened? Something the matter with the college entrance certificate from your prep school?"

Harold admitted that this was not the reason. Finally, having long awaited a sympathetic ear into which to pour the sad story, he told of his dashed hopes.

"Well, that's too bad," Rhoades agreed, when at last Harold had completed his lament. "You know, you really don't have to worry about money at Tate. That is, not much. I worked my way through. I even shined shoes for a while to get by. I started a bootblack stand on the campus, and another self-help student and I did the shining ourselves. But it was a flop that way. The boys didn't like having their shoes shined by classmates. It made them feel cheap somehow. So the other chap and I hired a couple of professional bootblacks, and then business was fine. We paid our help their wages and the rest was all velvet. The stunt went over so

well that pretty soon we had to put in two more chairs. Now the Student Shoe Shine Parlor has been taken over by the Undergraduate Self-Help Bureau and is putting four or five of the boys through college. There are all sorts of ways like that of getting through Tate on nothing a year."

"And you found time to be football captain too," Harold marveled.

"Yes, football is what makes anything else tough, though," Rhoades declared. "When you're playing football, you haven't got time to do much else—even study. The profs kick because the boys on the team don't keep up their work. But it isn't the boys' fault. Not that football takes up a lot of time in itself. But you practice football every afternoon from two until dark, and then see how much you feel like studying at night. You're tired and sore and your head is full of coaching and signals. No, sir, athletes don't fail in their work because they're dumb or not interested. They're just tired. I used to take out my books after dinner in football season and I'd be so doggoned sleepy by nine o'clock that I would doze off right at my study table. My roommate would have to pound my back off to wake me up and get me to bed. For a fellow who is tending furnaces on the side or delivering Tate 'Tattlers' or doing anything

else to work his way through, it's next to impossible to play football too."

"I'd want to play football," Harold mused, fascinated by these expert comments from his Olympian seatmate.

"Well, it's too bad you aren't to have the chance," Rhoades agreed politely, though the private glance he gave Harold seemed to indicate that he did not consider Harold's chances of making the Tate team too sure-fire.

They parted at the Cleveland station, Rhoades was to catch an express train on another railroad.

"Maybe I'll see you at Tate, after all, some time," was the assistant coach's last cheerful prophecy.

"There's not a chance, I'm afraid," said Harold, and tried to smile.

Then the visitor from Sanford consulted the memorandum book in which he had written his Uncle Peter's address. He strove to recall the explicit and many times repeated directions he had received from his father as to how the Thatcher Steel Works were to be reached. Having, with difficulty, turned his mind from thoughts of Tate shoe-shining stands and football to drop forgings, he discovered what trolley car he was to take and walked out of the station to the street.

A half hour of jolty riding in the street car

brought him to a region of smoking chimneys, blast furnaces and grimy, squatty brick factory buildings. It was the noon hour, and sweaty, sooty men, with exposed hairy chests roamed the streets. Harold felt rather small and timid as he passed them on his way from the trolley to the Thatcher Works. As he turned a corner, he read the name he was seeking on a plaque set in the darkened brick cornerstone of probably the most uninviting-looking of all the factories in the neighborhood. It was sprawled over two blocks. Blast furnace fires were belching. Cranes were clanging. Bells were ringing. A donkey engine wheezed and puffed at its job of pushing flat cars around. A haze of bituminous coal smoke hung in the air. Harold stopped at a door into the glass of which was stuck a placard reading: "Office. Unless You Have Business Here—Keep Out!"

It had long been a secret grievance of Henry Lamb's that, though all of his wife's folks had money, they had never made any overtures to share it with him. Not that he would have accepted any of it if they had. But still it was only common decency that some sort of arrangement should have been suggested. He was an excellent bookkeeper. Why had, for instance, not Peter Thatcher made him head of the accounting department

at the Works? It was because he thought the Thatchers should long ago have done something for the Lambs that Henry had had no qualms in approaching Peter Thatcher in regard to giving Harold a start in business. Perhaps Peter would take a notion to the boy and do handsomely by him.

It was true that the Thatchers seemed to have mastered the peculiarly American knack of starting with nothing and finishing with a great deal. Peter had started as a wheel-barrow boy in the very plant which he now owned and which had made him a fortune. Peter Thatcher was self-made and was very proud of it. John Thatcher, his brother, had entered a Cleveland bank as an office boy and was now its president. Another brother, James, was head of a dye works near New York, having entered the city as a youth with all his belongings in his pocket handkerchief.

Yes, the Thatchers had made money. And now Peter Thatcher, at the age of sixty-three, was endeavoring to abandon gradually his life-long toil and enjoy some of the fruits of his labors. And he was finding it rather difficult. The Winter previous, he had journeyed to Palm Beach and had sickened of the gilded Florida resort in a week. He missed the furnace back in Cleveland. He fretted because he honestly believed his very efficient

general manager would fall down on the job if he did not have Peter Thatcher at his elbow. In June of this year, he had journeyed to Europe, at the earnest behest of his wife and his physician, intending to remain until September, and the first of August had seen him back on the job again. Now Peter had resigned himself to dying in harness. He was too old and too inexperienced at anything but work, to play. In his heart he regretted this. He was beginning to question seriously whether working hard and amassing millions was the sole object in life.

He began to envy men with much less money than himself but with much more variegated interests. Cultured men. Well dressed men with carefully modulated voices speaking perfect English. Men who talked of golf and yachts and the opera. Peter Thatcher was beginning to wonder if being a gentleman were not a worthier object in life than being a millionaire.

It was such a Peter Thatcher that Harold Lamb, very young and innocent and gloomy and somewhat quaking as to knees, came to interview that hot August noon.

A hard-faced young lady industriously chewing gum sat at the combination telephone switchboard and information desk in the outer room of Peter Thatcher's offices. An army of

empty typewriters loomed between this railed-off reception room and the private sanctums beyond. The Thatcher stenographic force was out to lunch. Mr. Thatcher, however, might possibly be in, the hard-faced lady grudgingly admitted. She sent Harold's note, prepared by his father before leaving Sanford, in by a red-headed messenger boy, reluctant to rise from his perusal of a flamboyant magazine called "Secret Society Scandals."

A few minutes later the boy reappeared with the information, very surprising to the telephone lady, that Mr. Thatcher would see the young gentleman at once. The office boy leading the way, Harold wove back through the empty typewriter desks to the center of the three private offices in the rear. His guide, turned very angelic and respectful, held the door open and Harold passed through.

He had met his uncle only twice before in his life, the last meeting having occurred five years previously on the occasion of Harold's Grandpa Amos Thatcher's death in Xenia, Ohio, at the age of ninety-three.

Peter Thatcher, a short man, but very stocky of body and rugged of face, arose from his chair and, greeting his nephew cordially, invited him to take the visitor's chair by the big, bare, shiny flat-top desk. This came as somewhat of a shock to Harold. He had been

led by his father to believe that Uncle Peter was somewhat of an ogre, a ferocious old man to be handled very cagily.

Uncle Peter drew a humidor of black cigars from his desk drawer. He offered one to Harold, who declined it. The steel magnate nodded approvingly, bit the end from one of the weeds and lighted the other extremity. He blew a cloud of expensively smelling smoke into the air. He sighed.

Then he said in a crisp, clipped voice: "You've grown to be quite a boy, Harold, since I saw you last. How's your mother—and father?"

Harold said nervously that he had left them very well indeed.

"'S good," agreed Uncle Peter. He took another long puff of his cigar and shot Harold a glance from under shrewd, bushy gray eyebrows. "How about you, eh?" asked Peter Thatcher. "Ready to go to work here, are you? Think you'll like the steel business, do you?"

For the life of him Harold could not force himself to be anything but truthful even at that moment. He knew that if he followed his father's advice, he would now lie diplomatically. But he couldn't. He was, instead, quite silent and embarrassed.

Peter Thatcher sensed the situation at once.

"Not too keen for it, eh? Feel like a crook about to go to jail, don't you? Well, well. That's a pretty howdy-do. I understood from your father that you were anxious to start at the bottom here and learn the steel industry inside out. He said you just tormented him all the time to be allowed to come here and work. I guess that was just one of Henry's pipe dreams, eh?"

Harold rebelled. "I never told my father I wanted to work here," he blurted out. Then, realizing that this was a little tough on Uncle Peter, he added quickly, "I don't want to work anywhere for a while. I want to go to college—to Tate."

The steel man started in surprise. He puffed on his cigar and studied this surprising situation. He ventured, "So you want to go to college, eh? Where did you get that idea?"

Harold got up steam at once, thus encouraged. Here, of all places, he was encountering tolerance for his cherished ambition! He had expected to be handled very gruffly by Uncle Peter. He had had visions of himself in overalls pushing a wheelbarrow full of coke a half hour after passing through the door of the Thatcher Steel Works. He thought any mention of college on these premises would result in his being boiled in molten steel or something equally terrible.

And now Uncle Peter seemed to think wanting to go to college was a perfectly natural wish! Uncle Peter was urging him to talk about it!

Harold talked. He told in infinite detail about his conversation with Professor Harlow Gaines, the alumni meeting here in Cleveland. "The College Hero," Chester Trask and "Dusty" Rhoades, the Tate "Tattler," Dean Pennypacker's speech, everything. And Peter Thatcher listened intently. He was getting in his mind a glimpse of a world he had never known at first hand. The world that Pinckney Parsons Young, President of the Indemnity Bank, for instance, had dwelt in for a while. The world that made Young and other men like him different from Peter Thatcher, though Peter had more money than they and served on the same boards of directors.

When Harold, breathless, had at last finished, Peter was silent for a moment, staring at his nephew. Then he asked quietly, "If you are so crazy to go to college, why don't you go?"

"Dad says he hasn't the money to send me and that he wouldn't send me if he had it," Harold explained.

"Is that so? Henry is pretty positive,"

Peter said dryly. He added, "How much would it cost to go to this Tate?"

Harold caught his breath. He looked at his uncle hopefully, incredibly. "Well, I have $485 saved. That would pay my railroad fare and give me spending money for a year. If I could only get together about $500 more for tuition and room rent, I'd be all right. That would be for just the first year. I wouldn't need outside help after that. I'd work hard Summers and do odd jobs around the campus and—"

Peter Thatcher broke in, "You say you've saved $485. How did you get it?"

"I sold the Acme Washing Machine the last three Summers in Sanford."

"H'mm," mused Uncle Peter. He did not want to help his nephew unless he deserved it. He would not spoil the boy by sending him through college like a prince. Peter Thatcher believed that we enjoy only that which we earn. He was anxious to discover whether or not Harold wanted to go to college badly enough to work for it. The washing machine money augured well. But—

Suddenly Peter's face softened. He seemed to be talking beyond his young listener, to be even talking largely to himself as he said, "I've been thinking things over, Harold, and

I've come to the conclusion that there is something to this college business. None of the Lambs or Thatchers have ever been to college. And they've missed something—something that money can't buy. So I've decided that maybe I'll help you go to this Tate and see what happens."

Harold's mouth was half-open in utter surprise. He kept his wide eyes fixedly upon his uncle, fearful that he was not seeing and hearing aright.

"Now, what I propose to do," Peter Thatcher went on, assuming a crisp, business-like air, "is first to see whether or not you think enough of college to work for the right to go. By the way, could you still get into this Tate place? You graduated from High School, didn't you? Isn't too late, is—"

"Oh, no!" Harold broke in. "My high school graduation certificate will admit me to Tate all right, Professor Gaines says. Any time up to the tenth of September is early enough to send it in. They've built a lot of new dormitories and other improvements there, the Tate 'Tattler' says, and are ready for everybody that wants to come."

"H'mm. Don't sound very exclusive," commented the steel manufacturer. Then he got down to business again. "Now, looka here, Harold: I like this washing machine

idea. That takes salesmanship and anybody who can sell has something to him. Have you still got the Sanford agency for the Acme people?"

"Why, yes. I wrote for it last May. But dad wouldn't let me take it up. He made me go to work in the bank."

"Well, here's what you do," said Uncle Peter. "You go back and tell Henry you're through at the bank. And you hustle out and start selling these washing machines again. And for every dollar that you earn between now and the tenth of September, I'll advance you two. See? If you earn a hundred and fifty dollars commissions, you'll get three hundred from me. That's fair enough, isn't it? I figure you ought to make $150 at least, seeing that the field hasn't been worked since last Summer."

"I could make that much," Harold promised. "I'll work hard!"

"Go to it then," encouraged Uncle Peter. "You tell Henry and Carrie I mean business. Tell them I won't take you in the foundry here till you get yourself a college education. Then I'll give you a job worth while. If you have any trouble with your father, just let me know. I'll write him a letter. I'll even run down and talk to him if necessary."

Peter Thatcher smiled. Mingled with his

honest desire to help Harold was the mischievous satisfaction of thwarting the stubborn Henry Lamb, for whom he had never entertained any high degree of esteem.

"It's wonderful! I can't begin to thank you, Uncle Peter," stammered Harold, red of face, shining of eye.

"Don't try then," Peter suggested. "Remember—it all depends on yourself. Show me you've got the stuff by selling these machines and I'll help you to the extent that you'll be able to squeeze through this Tate place. You won't be able to fling the money around like John Trask's boy. You'll have to mind the nickels and dimes, keep away from the speed boys. But you'll be able to go to college."

Peter pushed himself out of his swivel chair and held out his hand, indicating that the interview was over. At the door the steel magnate added, "I know you'll make good. You won't let a chance like this slip, will you?"

"You bet I won't! I'll put Acme Washing Machines all over Sanford County!" cried Harold fervently.

He walked on air to the door.

CHAPTER V

HENRY LAMB expressed the opinion privately to his wife and son that Peter Thatcher had experienced an attack of softening of the brain.

Henry professed to have seen the steel magnate's malady coming for a long time. Peter's trip to Florida, Peter's journey to Europe, Peter's attempt to take up golf, all these, according to Henry, were symptoms. It had taken Harold's visit to Cleveland and the boy's mention of college to bring the symptoms to a head. Peter Thatcher was a gone goose, declared Henry. How else could one explain this crazy offer of the shrewd-minded, toil-bred Peter to squander money assisting a boy not even his own son to waste four years of his own life?

At first Henry Lamb declared with considerable vehemence that he would not permit Harold to enter this scheme. He forbade his son to sell washing machines. It was undignified. It would not get him anywhere. Henry declared his intention of speaking to Walter Coburn in the morning about taking Harold permanently into the bank. Harold could for-

get the plan of entering the Thatcher Steel Works at all.

But against this arbitrary decision, Henry met sharp and concerted rebellion on the part of his son and—his wife. He had expected it from Harold and was prepared to handle it. But the angry and determined light that now flashed into the eyes of the usually meek Carrie Thatcher Lamb abashed him.

Mrs. Lamb unexpectedly flung down her knitting upon the table. She rose to her feet and faced her husband. Her quiet voice was unnaturally raised.

"You'll do nothing of the kind, Henry Lamb!" she cried. "If Peter wants to help Harold, that's Peter's business! Thank God he has the money and the generosity to do it. It isn't that he's going to make the boy a gift he won't earn. Harold will be working for it, every penny of it! If he's got the grit and gumption to warrant Peter's help, he's entitled to it.

"You let Harold alone. Let him get out and sell washing machines again. He did it before and he can do it again. See whether or not he can make enough money to go to college. If he can, it's our duty to let him go. It's a wonderful thing for a boy, and Harold deserves his chance. And, what's more, I, for my part, am going to help him get it."

She turned to Harold, something of her son's own burning ambition to go to college shining in her eyes, which were so nearly like his. "I know a number of members of the Ladies' Aid that are thinking of buying washing machines, Harold. Mrs. Todd, for one. And there are the farmers' wives out in the country districts that you've never tried to sell to before. You can take the Ford and call on them too."

So, bright and early the next morning Harold Lamb became again the Sanford agent for the Acme Washing Machine. He did not wait for a sample machine to arrive. He used his mother's as a demonstrator. He piled it into the tonneau of the Lamb family car and set out upon his rounds.

He spent an intensely busy, happy month. He was hard at work each day when it was hardly light. He came home, tired but unquenchable, each night, often long after dark. He called at every door in Sanford. He scoured the country districts, talking with toil-bent rural housewives and then carrying the argument out to their husbands in the fields. He demonstrated his sample machine until it was nearly worn out. He took it apart countless times and put it together again for the benefit of doubting and mechanically minded customers. He littered the county with the

booklets obtained in a hurry from the Acme company's Cleveland branch.

And he sold washing machines—more of them than he had dared dream possible!

His heart was in the job. He was a good salesman, frank, eager, honest, convincing. He told his prospects that the money he earned was to send him to college, and they sympathized for the most part with his ambition. His commissions mounted rapidly. By the first of September he was able to write to Uncle Peter that he had written up business enough to net him $150. And this would be sufficient, augmented by the steel man's promised aid, to send Harold to Tate!

Peter Thatcher wrote back cautiously congratulating his nephew and suggesting that the youth mail to Tate an application to enter the Freshman class, along with his High School graduation certificate.

Harold sent the letter off that night.

The next morning Harold set out again upon his washing machine rounds, a new incentive spurring him on to even more strenuous efforts. Ten days later came the official-looking envelope bearing the name of the Registrar of Tate University. Harold opened it with hands that were all thumbs. But he need not have been so nervous. The letter enclosed stated that Harold Thatcher Lamb, as far as

the Registrar's office could determine, was eligible to become a member of the Class of 1929 at Tate University. The college year, the letter went on, opened the twenty-first of September. A little red-backed book of suggestions for Freshmen was attached. This was known on the campus as the "Freshman Bible."

One belated Summer afternoon in mid-September Harold took his initial step into his new and eagerly awaited world. His father and mother escorted him and his new trunk and his hand bags to the railroad station at Sanford. Henry Lamb was now quite resigned to Tate. He had even bragged a little at the last Masonic meeting of his son's pending departure for college. In fact, Henry was quite the most cheerful of the three Lambs as they alighted from Dugan's bus at the station and went in search of "Sandy" Forbes, the station agent, to see about having the trunk checked. When old "Sandy" had rheumatically strapped the tag to the trunk handle and given the duplicate to Harold, the spirits of the Lambs sagged in unison. They sat down silently in the forlorn waiting room. Mrs. Lamb strove to keep her courage up by murmuring trivial admonitions to her son about continuing to drink his cup of hot water each morning before breakfast and the like. Fif-

teen minutes passed. Then there was a whistle down the tracks. The Lambs arose and sought the platform of the station. The Cleveland train steamed clangily in and wheezed to a stop. Harold's shiny new trunk was slid off the station truck into the yawning door of the baggage car by leathery hands as casually as if it made the trip every day.

"Good-by, dad," Harold gulped. Henry Lamb's lips quivered as he took his son's hand. "Good-by, mother," Harold trembled and he took her frail body into his long arms and kissed her many times. When he released her, they were both weeping frankly.

"You'll be a good boy, Harold," she quavered. "And you'll write me—as often as you can?"

"Every day," he promised, his shiny eyes trying to smile. "Don't worry, I'll be fine."

"All aboard," cried the impassive conductor.

Harold swung, waving his hand to the two small figures on the platform, up the car steps. He stood there waving, and waved to, until the train drew him out of sight. Then he gulped again, very deeply. He walked slowly into the car of the swaying train. Already he felt strangely alone and far from cheerful. He was leaving the only world he knew be-

hind, the only two people in the world, aside from possibly Peter Thatcher, whom he loved. His father was a fine man. His mother was the world's best. What was he doing, abandoning them this way, making his mother cry? For an instant he wanted to jump off the train, to run back to them and cry, "I'm not going to college. I want to stay here with you."

But in the next moment he was asking himself if such weakness was worthy of a son of Old Tate. Imagine Chester Trask weeping as he set out for college! Harold's shoulders braced inside his sweater. As the train rolled out of Sanford, he stooped for an instant to gaze out of the window for a last glimpse of the little white Lamb house standing between Main Street and the tracks. Then he walked erectly into the smoking car and sat down.

On his way to college at last! Realizing the ambition and dream of a lifetime. He looked around at the laborers, traveling salesmen and other sojourners in the smoker with him and half expected them to crowd around him and congratulate him. Poor drab clods, little did they know the Paradise that awaited him at the end of *his* journey.

Uncle Peter had written that he would be unable to meet the sub-Freshman in Cleveland. He had, however, sent the promised

check. Although Harold had never before contemplated a railroad trip in a sleeping car, he had no qualms. When the local train arrived in the Ohio metropolis, Harold lugged his new suitcase down to the street level of the station. He stood on the hot sidewalk, his hand luggage at his feet. It consisted of a worn and bulging suitcase, rescued from the Lamb garret, a new hand bag, golf bag, tennis racket and ukulele. He looked out into the cobble-stoned street at the steady procession of trolley cars clanging past him. He wished Uncle Peter could have been there to direct him. But Uncle Peter was out of town. Eventually he located a trolley car bearing the name of the station where he was supposed to board the express train for Tate. He hailed the car and struggled onto it with his luggage, earning the wrath of conductors and passengers as he bumped into them with his unwieldy burden.

Finally he reached his destination and bore his bags into the high-domed waiting room of the second station. He dropped down into a seat, draping his baggage around him. He mopped his brow. He had a whole hour to wait for his train. But he stayed there, taking no chances. He watched the milling crowds and fingered his Pullman tickets nervously.

And then, at last, the gates were flung open. The long, shiny train had slid into the station. Harold declined the porters' offers to tote his bags. He would have to economize, the sub-Freshman knew, and he might as well begin at once.

Harold confusedly sought Car V-6, and was awed by his first authentic glimpse of the inside of a Pullman car. There was a little preliminary bumping about as the train changed engines. Then smoothly it glided out of the train shed and within an hour Harold was further away from home than he had ever been in his life before.

For another hour or more he kept his face nearly glued to the window pane, gazing as intently upon the flat, uninteresting Ohio scenery as if it were the Grand Canyon. Then he turned to a contemplation of "College Comedy," a magazine which he had purchased at the Cleveland station. This consisted mostly of jokes reprinted from humorous student publications at the various universities. Many of the jokes and illustrations, Harold had to admit, were rather broad and approaching the risqué. He even noticed two or three of this character bearing the tag-line of the "Tate Totem Pole," the funny paper of his own alma mater. He remembered that

Professor Gaines had mentioned this Tate publication, but had added that it was "frivolous and frequently censorable—nothing in it for you, Lamb."

Harold read two of the fiction stories in "College Comedy," written by college-educated professional humorists, and found them disconcertingly full of flappers, cocktails, "necking" and rather ribald dancing parties. He decided that "College Comedy" grossly misrepresented both college and comedy and tossed it on the floor. Goodness knows, he wasn't going to college for the things this magazine, with its Parisian lady on the cover, portrayed as being the chief ingredients of a college education. Such frivolities surely had no part in the life of a big, popular figure such as, for instance, Chester Trask.

Harold's meditations were interrupted by the entrance into the car of a white-coated colored gentleman who swayed down the aisle intoning monotonously, "First call for dinner. First call for dinner." Harold had never eaten in a railway dining car. He had an intuition that it would be a betrayal of his inexperience if he arose at once and followed this dark Mercury of the food gods, though he was hungry. He therefore kept his seat while several others in the car ambled out. If there was a "first call," he argued, there would

be a second. His reasoning was sound. There *was* a second. Still Harold stubbornly retained his perch near the window. Then came the ominous announcement from the itinerant announcer, "Lawst call for dinner." Harold and the one remaining person in the Pullman got up with alacrity and made their way forward through the rolling train.

When he had attained the narrow passageway leading into the dining car past the efficiently compact kitchen, Harold discovered that the other last-minute diner had already secured a seat. The tables were apparently filled to capacity. Perspiring waiters were lurching in and out with trays raised perilously aloft. A multitude of mouths and arms were busy above the white napery of the tables with food and drink. The harassed head waiter spotted Harold and hurried toward him. He raised one finger. Harold finally gleaned that the gesture meant, "Have you only one in your party?" He nodded.

The head waiter looked around the car helplessly. At length he spied one vacant seat at a table set for four. On one side of the table sat an elderly, sour-faced couple. The remaining occupant was a girl—a strikingly pretty girl with dancing brown eyes and the softest, curliest brown hair you ever saw. She was about eighteen years old, slightly but

lithely built and with the most adorable slightly retroussé nose in the world.

She was the kind of a girl your mother must have been.

As the head waiter approached her, a freckled-faced little train boy passing through the car suddenly paused beside her chair and hailed her cheerfully, "Hello, Peggy. Haven't seen you in a long time. Are you still helping your mother with the boarding house?"

The girl had a newspaper and her dessert spread on the table in front of her. She was manipulating a pencil with one hand and working a crossword puzzle; with the other hand she was conveying eatables daintily to her smooth, red lips.

She glanced up in friendly fashion at the train boy and, recognizing him as a youngster from her home town, answered, "Hello, Johnny Niles. Yes, I'm helping mother. And I have a new job at the Hotel Tate—in the check room."

When the train boy had passed on, the head waiter took heart. For the elderly couple seated opposite the girl arose and made their way out of the car. And the girl seemed so agreeable. The head waiter held up his hand and motioned Harold to come in and become the pretty girl's tablemate.

Harold slid timidly into the seat beside her without venturing to look at her further than to assure himself that she was a girl. He was girl-shy. As she continued to devote herself exclusively to her crossword puzzle and her dessert, he turned his head and glanced at her again. And this time his glance lingered. For, though he could see only her soft, curving neck, where the brown ringlets nestled, and her pretty profile, yet he could somehow sense that she was somebody wholly different from any kind of a girl he had ever met before. She made him feel warm inside. She seemed so nice, cozy and friendly.

Soon he was looking over her shoulder at the crossword puzzle she was so intent upon. Unconsciously his head drew nearer to her. She seemed to be groping for a solution of "19 vertical—a word for one you love." Harold's brow became knitted with thought in his effort to help her. Suddenly she turned her head toward him, grasped what he was doing and smiled pleasantly.

Harold, more at ease, volunteered, "I think I know the word for 19 vertical—"a name for one you love. It's 'sweetheart.'"

She shook her head.

"Darling!" he suggested.

That didn't seem to fit either.

"Dearest!" he cried triumphantly.

"Precious!" she countered.

"Honeybunch!"

"Sweetie!"

Then he felt a hand fall upon his shoulder and turned around. A sweet, motherly-looking, elderly lady from the next table had laid a hand upon him and another upon the amazed girl beside him and was saying in a blissful voice, "Isn't it wonderful to be in love?"

For an instant Peggy looked confused. It was enough for Harold, watching her. He realized how his words must have sounded and a panic seized him. Always bashful around girls, always timid with strangers, he blushed furiously.

He jumped to his feet and, with an exclamation and look of terror, rushed out into the aisle of the diner. Without a look ahead or behind he fled. Fled straight into the fat stomach of a husky waiter balancing a tray of eatables aloft, sending the waiter sprawling against an adjacent table and scattering the food all over the surrounding region of the car. The head waiter started into the car from the kitchen entrance and narrowly missed being rent asunder by the flying Harold. A pair of late diners waiting out in the narrow aisle by the kitchen were bumped into.

Not until he had reached what he was sure

A Harold Lloyd Corp. Production—A Pathé Picture. *The Freshman*

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

was his own car did Harold's pace or fears slacken. And then his panic was renewed when he looked about him and wondered if, after all, this *was* his car. It was an entirely changed locale. The cushioned seats had given way to twin lines of hung green cloth with a narrow aisle running through them. He stood uncertainly for a moment, then walked down to where his seat must have been. The explanation of this strange transformation at length occurred to him. The porter had made up the berths while he was at dinner.

Harold parted a green curtain and quickly closed it again. A fat, grouchy-looking old man was sitting on the edge of a berth trying to extract tired feet from tight shoes. He next intruded upon a slim gentleman of similar irascible disposition. The berth following was Harold's, as proven by the presence of his new bag underneath it.

Harold lay down, but not to sleep. He was thinking of that embarrassing scene in the dining car. And, in spite of his panic, of his ignominious flight, he felt that he would like to see that girl again.

Harold had never been fond of girls. He had never experienced the youthful palpitations of puppy love, the high school dance flirtations and the like. Girls had never entered

into his scheme of life. But somehow this girl seemed different. She was so fresh-looking, so pretty, so friendly-like. She was not at all like the giggling, silly, flirtatious young ladies that haunted the Sanford soda fountains and were met by slicked-up young swains Sunday evenings after church.

This girl looked like a person a fellow would like to talk to, to make a pal of. She stirred something vaguely warm within him, something that made him eager to know her name and see her again.

And, though he did not dream it, the girl was thinking of Harold too. Curled in her berth trying to become interested in a dry magazine, the girl was thinking of the scene in the dining car and her embarrassed table-mate. She was not angry with him. Neither did she feel like laughing at his discomfiture. There was something so frank, unspoiled, wholesomely attractive about his face. Something that appealed to the mother in her, as well as to something else. She wondered what his name was and when she would see him again.

After an hour of lying awake, Harold shook himself impatiently. Pleasant as it was, he couldn't be thinking of that girl all night. What else was there to do? Having noted the exact location of his sleeping place, he rolled

down the rapidly moving train like a sailor on a storm-tossed ship. From the curtained compartment at the end of the car he saw tobacco smoke issuing and heard the sound of male voices within. In the five minutes that he stood outside, he saw three men issue from this place and two others enter. He concluded that it was public and walked boldly in.

He entered a region of metal wash-bowls, mirrors and leather-upholstered seats. Three men occupied the compartment. Two were young and seated together. Opposite them lounged a puffy, middle-aged man, coatless, wearing a shirt with huge alternate purple and white stripes and smoking a black, greasy cigar. Both of the young men were puffing upon pipes. Harold wondered if one had to smoke to be admitted here. He disliked the taste of tobacco intensely.

The youth who wasn't reading the leather-bound red book looked up as he entered and nodded slightly. His roving eyes had seen the copy of the Tate "Tattler," the last one Harold had received, the "Special Reunion Number," bulging in Harold's pocket. Harold, taking this nod for an invitation and desperately in need of company, nodded in return and sat down near the nodder.

"Are you a Tate man?" asked the latter promptly. He was a husky, merry-faced

youth with blond hair slicked down and parted neatly in the center. His pipe was marked 2T5.

"Yes," said Harold proudly.

"Freshman, eh?" his questioner grinned.

Harold wondered how he had learned that and why he considered it a little amusing.

"My name's Keay—Dave Keay," offered the merry one. He nudged his companion, whose tortoise-shelled glasses were deeply buried in his book. "Snap out of it, 'Shelley,'" chided Keay. "We've got company. An entering man." Keay turned to Harold. "The bookworm is Logan—Tom Logan, editor of the 'Lit.' All the boys call him 'Shelley' because he writes poetry, the poor nut. Now, what's your name, Freshman?"

"Harold Lamb," answered Harold Lamb.

"Lamb?" and for some reason Keay laughed out loud. "Get that, 'Shelley'—the name's Lamb. Well, well. What a swell name for a Freshman. Well, glad to know you, Lamb. So is 'Shelley' here when he gets through blinking and really sees there's somebody else here besides me. 'Shelley's' ruining his poor old optics reading Baudelaire in the original. What do you know about that for highbrowed nuttiness, hey? Well, Freshman, I hope it's Lamb by name and not by nature." Keay seemed to think this such a witty crack that

Harold laughed with him just to be sociable.

Logan was a thin, esthetic-looking youth with dark circles under his pale green eyes and a mop of black hair straggling over his forehead. He and Keay came from the same town in Idaho and were really very good friends, though entirely dissimilar in temperament.

"Are you all set, Freshman?" Keay asked with condescending interest. "Got a dorm room and everything?"

"I don't think I understand," Harold asked, bewildered.

"I mean, are you going to live on the campus? Well, if you don't know, I guess you aren't. Did you pass all your entrance exams last Spring and get notified you were admitted without conditions? No? Well, then, you're rooming in town, kid—and Heaven help you! Those landlords out in town sure gyp the pants off the poor stoodents.

" 'Shelley' and I got a swell break in the draw and are going to live in Coulter this year. That is, if we can stand each other. I've had tough luck with my roommates so far. Freshman year I roomed with a bird who walked in his sleep darned near every night and finally fell out of bed and twisted his spine and had to leave college. Sophomore year I hitched up with one of these

darned politicians. He was out to bootlick the whole class, so he could get elected to things, and he had the room crowded all the time with ward-heelers smoking my tobacco and borrowing my shirts. Last year three bozos and I chipped in together and took a whole suite in Williams Hall. That's the place where President Madison roomed when he was in college. It's two hundred years old, I guess. The most terrible madhouse in the world. We staged a fight with the rats pretty near every night. And those three roomies of mine!—say, one of 'em was always staging a party and banging the piano when the rest of us wanted to study. It was terrible. I flunked two subjects and have to work like the dickens this year to make them up so I can graduate.

"That's why I picked out 'Shelley' here for a roommate. He'll be my good angel, see? He doesn't do anything but study and he does all his bickering down in the 'Lit' office. So I'll be able to work, see? He isn't a bad old egg at that, even though he's funny looking."

Logan, immersed in his French, paid no attention to this insult. Harold sat entranced at Keay's flood of words. He did not understand half the slang, but it seemed to the sub-Freshman that he was at last getting a taste of the real Tate. How he envied Keay his

breezy self-assurance, his unobtrusive well-fitting clothes, his doggy pipe.

Keay held forth in a rollicking monologue for fifteen minutes or more. "Now, you take my advice, Freshman," said Keay at one stage, "and look for a room in one of those wooden joints on Clark Street. Lay off those private dorms on Hill Place. They'll take the gold right out of your teeth over there. And the guys that room there—say, all they bring to college is a brush apiece to paint the campus red with. Half of 'em flunk out in February the first year. A bunch of millionaire meat packers' darlings and sons of big potato chip men from Saratoga. Get a quiet room and study your first year, Freshman. That way you get a drag with all the profs and they'll let you get away with murder the rest of your college course. You've established a reputation, see?"

At eleven o'clock Harold retired to his berth stuffed to the ears with advice, good, bad and indifferent. He had begun to think that the Freshman Bible, which was supposed to contain all an entering man should know about Tate and which he carried safely in his inside pocket, should be reëdited by David Keay, III.

Harold did not sleep well that night. It took him nearly half an hour to disrobe within

the narrow confines of his lower berth. When he at last lay down, it seemed to him that his resting place was a slab of solid concrete, very thinly covered. He closed his eyes, but he snapped them open again as the racing engine emitted a sudden, shrieking blast, nearly startling him out of his berth. The locomotive continued to do this at five-minute intervals. The berth was intolerably stuffy. Harold raised a window and a blast of cold night air, mingled with cinders, struck him in the face. He closed the window again, preferring to suffocate. He lifted the shade on its rollers and looked out. The train was rushing at a terrific pace through a black void, here and there punctuated with bright lights as a town was entered and left behind almost at one swoop.

Harold lay awake for three-quarters of the night. When at last he dropped off to a troubled sleep, his head was buzzing with the talk of Keay. In the back of his brain was the pleasing image of a very pretty girl with dark hair bordering on the Titian.

He was finally started out of his sleep by an object dropping to the floor beside his berth with the grace and lightness of a baby elephant. The traveling salesman in the berth above Harold was up for the day. Harold pushed the shade up cautiously. The bright

sun of a new day flashed into his face. He dressed awkwardly and laboriously. Fully clothed at last, he invaded the region of the wash-bowls and found a battalion of half-clothed men shaving before the mirrors, sousing their faces in water, groping about with soap-filled eyes after towels and asserting profanely that the service on this particular railroad was going to pot. Harold meekly waited his turn.

He was one of the last in the dining car. He learned from the waiter that they would arrive at Tate within an hour. Returning to his car after the most meager of breakfasts, for he was terribly afraid he would not get off the train at the precious station, he discovered that the sleeping car had been transformed into a sitting car again. Moreover, Keay and Logan were lounging just three seats in back of him. He somewhat bashfully joined them.

"Gee, Freshman, you look as if you'd been pulled through a putty-blower," Keay called out cheerfully. "What's the matter? Didn't they tuck you under the sheets carefully enough last night? Golly, kid, if you don't sleep well on a train, wait till they get you into one of those boarding house iron-posted beds!"

By sitting with these two sons of Tate, Har-

old was rewarded forty minutes later by having Keay's excited voice point out to him across the rolling country to their left the tips of sun-glinted towers.

"There's the old joint now!" Keay sang out in a glad voice that belied the deprecating epithet he had bestowed upon his alma mater. "Look, 'Shelley,' old kid, you can see Coulter tower."

Even the sad-faced Logan looked and smiled.

Very calm and stately and formidable the spires of Tate University seemed to Harold as he envisaged them across three miles of neat farming country. They thrilled and chilled him at one and the same time. He suddenly felt quite small. Sanford and Henry Lamb seemed very many miles away.

But he had little time to think about this. Already the porter was gathering the luggage and piling it on the platform between the cars. Then Harold and his two now thoroughly excited companions were standing beside it as the train slowed down.

Harold was nearing Tate and glory at last.

CHAPTER VI

TATE UNIVERSITY was once called, fairly accurately, by a newspaper writer "a large football stadium with a college attached."

That this description fitted the place was chiefly due to its development in the five years of its existence under the progressive leadership of Dean Amos Pennypacker. Dr. Pennypacker looked like a college dean. His face was austere, his nose thin. Some of the student body said he had remained a bachelor because he was afraid his wife would call him by his first name.

Dean Pennypacker had a mania for expansion. He believed Tate would be a better place if it were a bigger place. He got donations from millionaires. He put the college on a business basis. New dormitories sprang up like magic. A football stadium finer than anything of its kind anywhere was built. There were additional tennis courts constructed. The alumni began scouring the country for athletic material to augment the glory of the new Tate on gridiron and diamond.

Though the bulk of the student body, which was now increased to three thousand, remained

the hard-working sons of middle-class parents, scions of rich families began also to turn favorable eyes toward Tate.

The town of Tate kept pace with its chief industry, the University. An immense fireproof modern hostelry, the Hotel Tate, was erected on University Street, completely overshadowing the three or four small inns that had hitherto striven in vain to take care of the thousands that flocked to town on the occasion of the big football games. University Street, once a cowpath, became akin to Broadway. Department stores, chain drug and cigar stores, apartment houses, and movie theaters sprang up. Wealthy alumni came back to the scenes of their youth to spend their last years, erecting handsome residences on shady side streets or buying farms in the neighborhood.

Such was the Tate which Harold Lamb was now approaching.

The new field stone station sprawling artistically over a hundred yards of trackage was alive with humanity. Tatians in knickers and white-flannels were swarming over the concrete platforms and even the tracks, eager to meet returning friends. A solid line of yellow taxicabs waited on the other side of the station. Trunks were piled high everywhere.

Harold stood on the car platform and mar-

veled. A half mile down the track, the train had begun to glide between stone, ivy-covered dormitories with their gayly curtained French windows, out of which laughing boy faces leaned. Keay had pointed out the athletic fields and the huge gray bulk that was the new gymnasium. But as the train now eased to a stop, Keay and Logan both leaped out with their suitcases into a mob of shouting students and left Harold to himself.

"Yea, Dave!" yelled a joyous voice.

"Yea, 'Spike'!" roared Dave Keay and leaped to pound a husky shoulder and pump a welcoming hand. Even the shy Logan seemed swallowed up by his friends.

Harold felt alone and deserted. He was fairly pushed down to the platform by the exiting collegians behind him. He stood on the hard concrete, his suitcase in one hand, his golf sticks in the other, smiling, half expecting some of the throng would rush up to him and make him welcome. He heard a sudden shout and saw the mob rush past him toward one of the rear cars. He looked back in time to see a familiar figure standing at the top of the car steps waving to his admirers. Harold took a folded piece of paper from his pocket and consulted it. It was the worn clipping from the Tate "Tattler." It confirmed his recognition of the stalwart youth now holding court

on the car steps. It *was* Chester Trask. The great Tate hero had been on the train with him, and he had never known it! Rapidly Harold walked over to join the shouting crowd of Trask's greeters. But he was nearly bowled over by the rush of the late-comers among the students eager to welcome back Chester Trask to the scene of his triumphs.

Bewildered, Harold paused beside the train to catch his bearings and take a fresh grip upon the luggage that was slipping from his grasp. He happened to be standing directly underneath an open window of the smoking car. A passenger within chose that precise moment to light his pipe and flick the smoldering match carelessly out of the window. It landed upon the woolly white sweater Harold was wearing. Harold, absorbed in the scene about him, was for the instant unaware that the match was burning a hole in his sweater, sending a thin curl of acrid smoke into the air. But the passenger, gazing from the window, saw the impending danger. Leaning over the sill, he clapped a large paw upon Harold's back and smothered the blaze in its infancy.

That was enough for lonesome, anxious-eyed Harold. In this atmosphere of greeting and back-slapping, the Freshman guessed at once that some friendly soul was slapping

him upon the back too. Deciding instantly that the tall, elderly, distinguished-looking man nearest him was the one who had made the advance, Harold, with a joyous exclamation, slapped that individual smartly on the back in return. Having caused his victim to turn quickly around, Harold executed deftly the jig step of Lester Laurel, thrust out an eager hand and said brightly, "My name's Harold Lamb. What's yours?"

He was chagrined to see the elderly stranger freeze up at once. Never before had this dignified gaffer been thus informally greeted. He frowned at Harold. He stared. Then he gave the explanation for his conduct with pompous pride.

"I am the Dean of this University," said the stranger crisply.

Harold's face fell and he moved away as quickly as possible. He had been in Tate but five minutes and already he had annoyed Dean Amos Pennypacker by slapping him upon the back! Tate was such a strange, confusing environment. He wondered if he would ever get used to it. If only he had Harlow Gaines or "Dusty" Rhoades or Dave Keay to show him around. He did not even know what to do next.

At that moment two young men with tanned faces and mischievous eyes seemed to solve

this problem for him. They had observed his encounter with Dean Pennypacker and the taller of the two had commented, "Pipe the latest sport-model Freshman with the old-fashioned trimmings. Let's ride him." The youth who had made this remark was Dan Sheldon, a Sophomore who was said on the campus to make Simon Legree look like the Good Samaritan.

Dan, as spokesman for the duo, now addressed Harold blandly, "Entering man?"

Harold nodded appreciatively.

"Have you been assigned a car to take you to the college?"

"Why—no," Harold stammered, in considerable relief that now a problem was about to be solved for him.

"Then come along with us, Freshman," said the tall youth briskly.

They led him around the station to an open touring car parked at the curb. A Negro chauffeur lolled asleep at the wheel. Harold's guides silently indicated that he and his bags were to enter the tonneau. Harold obeyed, spreading his luggage about him and settling back with a luxurious air. Tate certainly received her Freshmen in style! Harold shut the door of the car smartly. Sheldon and his companion retired swiftly from the scene.

The snapping-shut of the door awoke the

Negro with a start. Without a word or a look behind, he pressed the starter of the car, threw it in gear and got under way with a jerk. So great a jerk indeed that it threw Dean Amos Pennypacker, who had been leaning against the mudguard talking with some friends, tumbling to the gutter. That dignified individual scrambled to his feet and dashed a few steps after the speeding car, only to be met with a cloud of black smoke from the exhaust. He stood, a sight for Tate eyes to behold, shouting and gesticulating after his own car and chauffeur.

Meantime, Harold was driven swiftly by the now thoroughly aroused Negro, who thought of course that his passenger was Dean Pennypacker, his employer. The car swung into a gravel drive onto the campus. Harold found himself in a bewildering region of trim green grass, faced on all sides by towering buildings. The paths criss-crossing the grass were filled with perambulating students. Motor cars blared down the bluestone roads. Youths were leaning out of the windows of the dormitories and shouting to each other. Janitors were bearing heavy trunks through the entrances. Express wagons, hand trucks and other vehicles jerked rapidly about. All was bustle and confusion.

The dean's car drew smoothly up to the

side door of an immense Grecian building located in almost the exact center of the campus. Harold, gathering that he was to alight, assembled his multitudinous luggage and, opening the car door, stepped to the ground. In that instant the Negro chauffeur caught sight of his passenger. The Ethiopian gasped. He seemed to turn pale under his black skin.

"Mah goodness," he cried. "I thought you was the dean. Mah goodness, I'll ketch it now!"

He stared at Harold, torn between anger at the Freshman, of whom he suspected a prank, and fear for the wrath with which his employer would greet him. The chauffeur stepped on the gas, turned sharply around and whirled the car back toward the station.

Harold turned red afresh. He was uncertain whether his youthful guide at the station had put a joke over on him or whether that merry individual had made an honest mistake. Harold remembered seeing groups of students pouring into the building beside which he now stood. Concluding that he had best do as the other Tatians had done, he looked around him and found a smaller entrance almost directly in front of him. After a moment's hesitation, he walked over, opened the door and sauntered expectantly in.

A sign on the brick wall above Harold's

head as he entered the building read: Stage Entrance. Tate Auditorium. In the great assembly hall of the auditorium proper the whole student body of Tate was gathering to be annoyed by the dean's opening address. It was the usual initial event signalizing the beginning of the college year and regarded as a nuisance by everybody, including the dean.

Harold, though he did not realize it, was now in the dusty region behind the curtain that separated the auditorium stage from the audience outside. The building was frequently used for theatricals. When the *pièce de résistance* was merely oratory, the curtain was kept lowered and only the front part of the stage used. The last show given in the Tate auditorium had been an Ibsen tragedy by the "Tate Players" and the place had not been touched back stage since. Harold found himself in what resembled a sparsely furnished room. There was a tall pedestal and two chairs. A snowy landscape painting hung lopsided on the wall. Dust covered everything. He looked around him and found to his dismay that he was alone.

Suddenly Harold heard a thin whine. It came from the conglomeration of ropes and pulleys running along the top of the curtain. Frightened for an instant, he listened. To his relief he decided that it must be a kitten.

He pulled over the pedestal, set it under the spot whence the noise had come and climbed wabblingly up on it. He could just reach his long arms up into the ropes. His finger-tips touched soft, warm fur. Then something sharp inside of a furry mass struck his arm. A tiny black kitten had leaped upon him just above the wrist. The sudden impact startled Harold and caused him to lose his balance on the pedestal. His sole support started swaying.

Harold thrust the kitten under his sweater and tried hard to maintain his equilibrium.

At that precise moment Dan Sheldon, who with several of his Sophomore cronies had followed the Freshman into the wings and were now concealing their mirth as they watched him from this vantage spot, rang the curtain on the stage smartly aloft.

On the other side of the curtain, in the main body of the Tate auditorium, sat the whole student body awaiting the arrival of the delayed Dean Pennypacker and his boring address!

To the amazement of the Tatians, they now gazed, not upon the dignified figure of the dean, but upon a frightened Freshman endeavoring wildly to regain his balance upon a tall, frail pedestal! Even as they stared at this strange spectacle, the Freshman lost

his struggle to stay aloft, slipped, grasped desperately at the air and crashed to the floor!

The audience, every eye riveted upon the stage, gasped. Then they roared with laughter.

Rising to his feet, Harold turned and faced the sea of mirthful faces and loud guffaws. He stood bewildered for an instant. Then he whirled around and started to rush off the stage. In his haste he upset the water pitcher resting near by on the table. His suitcase came unfastened and its contents spread over the stage.

Even when he at last attained the haven of the wings, it developed that Harold was not to be let off so easily. The shouts of laughter and catcalls from the auditorium were still ringing as stout arms grabbed him.

"Aren't you going to stay and make a speech?" sounded the voice of Sheldon in Harold's blushing ears.

"You'll have to say a few words of greeting to the student body," suavely interpolated another Sophomore. "It's a custom. You'll be unpopular if you don't. See—these Freshmen are all anxious to go out and talk." He pointed to a group of ten or more white-faced youths, obviously green and scared to death. They were herded together back stage and

guarded by three or four of the Sophomore cronies of Harold's tormentors.

Harold hesitated doubtfully. "You'll be unpopular if you don't." That was the warning that impressed him. For he was deeply anxious to be popular. If he was ever going to be a second Chester Trask, he mustn't take any chances of being unpopular. He remembered Trask's suavity at speech-making at the Cleveland alumni meeting.

Harold gulped. Then he said, "Well—if I'm expected to say something—I suppose—I ought to."

He walked out to the front of the stage, the kitten still held absurdly under his sweater. He wondered if the trembling of his knees looked as badly as it felt. He faced the sea of white, tittering faces in front of him. The crowd had arrived early, knowing what to expect. It was, as Sheldon and the others had explained, the custom at Tate to have Freshmen address the opening assemblage before the dean arrived. Each year a Sophomore committee lined up likely victims and inveigled them back stage. Then pushed them out to the delight and merriment of their fellow students. It was the opening event in the hazing season. Sheldon and Garrity had been at the station for the purpose of lining up the Freshman "speakers" and they had

picked Harold as the prize of the afternoon.

Harold's mouth opened twice before it emitted a word. Then the words came squeakily and haltingly, "Fellow students of Tate, I am here—here—yes, I am here—here—" Harold stopped. His face was suffused with red. The kitten, grown restless under his heavy sweater, was clawing into him, tearing his shirt, pricking his flesh. And more complications were on their way. For with stately tread a large, sleek cat came waddling out from the direction of the wings. The mother cat had come in search of her wandering kitten.

The feline paused at Harold's feet. Then a small tail protruding under Harold's sweater caught her sharp green eyes. She stopped, looked up and meowed. She started to climb the Freshman's leg, but he pushed her away. Then there were convulsive movements under the white sweater, clawings and scratchings that caused the would-be orator to wince and dance about on his feet. Then, with a final effort, the kitten reached open air at the neck of Harold's sweater and emerged upon his shoulder. With relief he seized the furry bundle gently and set the kitten upon the floor. Mother cat and offspring scampered off the stage and into the wings together.

Harold would at that moment have liked to follow them, but of course he couldn't. That would spoil everything. This was one of the big chances that comes once or twice in the lifetime of a man.

Harold straightened up and faced his audience smiling. "You'll be unpopular if you don't speak," he had been warned. What would Chester Trask do under circumstances like these? What would Lester Laurel, "The College Hero," do? Suddenly Harold felt in his pocket for the diary in which he had inscribed the memorable words of Lester. The book was not there. He looked down upon the stage, and there it lay, jolted out of his pocket in his encounter with the kitten. He picked it up. The familiar words came back to him out of his confusion. An inspiration!

To the amazement of the merrymakers in front of him, Harold Lamb stopped, struck an attitude, thrust out his right hand in a gesture of greeting, smiled broadly and exclaimed very cockily, "I'm just a regular fellow. Step right up and call me 'Speedy'!"

You could have knocked the entire student body of Tate over with a feather, including Harold's Sophomore stage-managers in the wings. The army of Tatians was stunned. Then it broke abruptly into mingled laughs and applause. Several voices shouted "Atta

boy, 'Speedy'!" and "You're all right, kid." They were uncertain whether the Freshman was wiser than he looked or whether his strange actions were another sign of his amazing greenness. But they were amused.

As he rushed off the stage, Sheldon slapped him on the back and yelled, "You're a darb, 'Speedy'!" The Sophomore held out his hand. Harold at once broke into the Lester Laurel jig step. His feet twinkled three or four times rapidly. He struck a cocky attitude. His right hand shot out and grasped the right hand of Dan Sheldon in a hearty grip.

"Put her there, 'Speedy'!" shouted another Sophomore. Harold did the movie actor's greeting again.

The Sophs shrieked with merriment. They crowded around with outstretched hands encouraging Harold's antics. The Freshman repeated his stunt again and again, each time to new outbursts of joy on the part of his audience.

"Oh, boy!" cried one Soph, almost doubling up with laughter. "'Step right up and call me "Speedy" '—you bet we will, kid. That's your name from now on—'Speedy' Lamb."

Harold, who believed he was making the hit of his life—and on the first day of college at that—was delighted. He was tickled pink.

He took all the laughter as a tribute to his likeableness. The students had received him with open arms. Less than an hour in Tate and everybody knew him! He even saw Chester Trask among the students back-stage. Harold was infinitely grateful to Sheldon. He was keen for the whole Sophomore class. They were fine fellows. What if they *had* put him into Dean Pennypacker's car—by mistake? He longed to do something for the Sophomores for all they had already done for him.

"Say, I tell you what," he radiated to Sheldon, "you get all your friends together and I'll stand treat for some ice cream. Where's a real good ice cream parlor around here anyway? Some place where they serve banana splits and all the high-class dishes."

Sheldon felt like howling, but he controlled himself and replied, "Sure, 'Speedy,' that's the stuff. The Palace is the joint you mean. High class, A-number-one in every respect. A couple of chocolate marshmallow meringues down there and your own grandmother wouldn't know you. You want to blow the boys to a little indigestion? O. K. I'll get 'em together. But first, cheese it the cop. Here comes old Pennypacker up the line in that buzz wagon you almost pinched from him. Up and at 'em, men!"

Harold followed the back stage contingent as they dashed out of the side door and around to the front entrance. Arrived there, they walked demurely in and took seats in the back of the huge auditorium just as Dean Pennypacker, looking very dignified in fresh linen and a long shiny black frock coat stepped out upon the rostrum. Harold noticed that somebody had been thoughtful enough to pull down the curtain.

The dean repeated substantially the same address that he had been making for the past five years on the opening day of college. He directed his talk primarily to "those among this assemblage who have lately come among us, who are taking up their labors at Tate University this semester for the first time, the members of the Freshman class." Harold sat bolt upright and inclined his ear earnestly unto wisdom. The president bade these newcomers to toil diligently and do many other highly edifying things. He interspersed this with an elephantine witticism to the effect that the entering men were not to believe that all that glittered was gold when dealing with members of the class immediately above them. The Seniors, who had been snickering at this remark for three years, snickered cynically anew. An almost audible sigh of relief went up from the warm, densely packed gathering

as Dean Pennypacker concluded his remarks and mopped his thin white brow with an immense handkerchief.

During the last few moments of the oration, Sheldon had been holding whispered consultations with those about him. When Harold had departed with the exiting mob and was once more on the cinder path outside, he found a group of about twenty grinning Sophomores surrounding him.

"Well, how about that ice cream, 'Speedy'?" Sheldon suggested with a broad grin.

"Oh, I'm a man of my word, you bet," Harold asserted jauntily. "Come on."

He was a little disturbed to see all twenty of the group around him fall in behind himself and the two Sophomore guides. Harold started to walk across the grass, but Sheldon seized his coat sleeve. "Don't walk on the grass, Freshman," he warned. "Not allowed, you know. Got to be a Sophomore to walk on the grass."

Harold, abashed, fell back. The little brigade turned to the right on a path leading down toward the iron gate that was the main exit of the college into University Street. To every group that they passed, Sheldon shouted, "Come on! Ice cream. 'Speedy's' treating."

Harold's party increased in size like a rolling snowball. By the time it had reached the

ornamental entrance of the Palace, it numbered over thirty. The students were madly cheering Harold and he took it very seriously, like a hero getting his just recognition.

The horde tramped into the Palace and lined up at the fountain. Joe Dugan, the proprietor, famous among all Tatians for his drooping mustaches and his imperturbability, surveyed the new customers with a wary eye. His two colored assistants rolled their optics in surprise.

"Double marshmallow meringue, Joe," called several voices. "Make mine a strawberry frap, Joe," sang out several more.

Harold was disturbed. He had expected them to order ice cream cones. His hand wandered into his pocket. Would he be able to back up his generosity with cold cash?

Joe spoke. He said dryly, "Yeh, and who's going to pay for 'em all?"

Sheldon pushed forward his protégé proudly. "Joseph," the Sophomore said severely, "don't you know that 'Speedy' Lamb never fails to settle his debts of honor? 'Speedy' will pay—with pleasure."

"Who—him?" asked Joe. "You mean the Freshman?"

"Certainly I'll pay," Harold announced loudly, feeling that his newly won and precious popularity was being assailed. "These

fellows are my guests. You may present the bill to me." He pulled a five-dollar note from his pocket and waved it aloft.

Joe was convinced. He gave the signal to his assistants for the orgy to commence. In a few minutes The Palace was turned into a soda, ice cream, frappé and sundae shambles. Harold tried a double marshmallow meringue and discovered it a very rich concoction made of soft ice cream, nuts, marshmallow whip, meringue and a secret ingredient that only the towheaded Joe, its inventor, knew. Harold found it too rich for his taste. But his guests consumed them like peanuts.

As each man finished, he set his empty glass or dish down on the counter, waved an indefinite salutation to Harold and disappeared out of the store. In an amazingly short time, the Freshman found himself alone with a half-consumed meringue, Joe Dugan and the bill lying in front of him and waiting to be paid. Harold finished the last of the meringue. Without looking at the bill, he covered it with his five-dollar note and stood waiting for his change. Joe sardonically played a tune on his cash register. Reaching into the till, he pulled out some coins and laid them before Harold. His change. It amounted to three cents. Harold, striving to

conceal his chagrin, thrust it into his trousers pocket.

Joe looked at him sadly, as was Joe's wont. "A fine bunch of grafters," the soda king drawled. "You stick with them, kid, and they'll have your shirt in a week. I know that gang."

Harold bristled. "On the contrary, they're very fine fellows. Personal friends of mine."

Joe raised thin hands aloft, indicating that it was none of his business. "All right, kid, all right," he conceded. "Have it your own way. Only I've been around here twenty years longer than you have. Just remember that."

And he started on the job of washing thirty glasses.

CHAPTER VII

HAVING spent a great deal more money on ice cream than he had intended, Harold was now determined that his living quarters, which he must now seek, should be as inexpensive as possible. He remembered that Dave Keay had said such accommodations could be secured on Clark Street.

Harold ventured to intrude upon Joe's rather cursory dish-washing long enough to inquire if the soda merchant knew where Clark Street was.

"Guess I ought to," Joe observed, shifting his cud of tobacco to the other side of his mouth. "Just walk down University Street here three blocks and when you come to that alley between Burnham's grocery and the First National Bank, that's Clark Street."

Out on sunny University Street the various store proprietors had placed benches in front of their shops for the convenience of the loafing studentry. The benches were liberally patronized by the staid Juniors and Seniors. They were forbidden to members of the two lower classes by edict of the Senior Council, the undergraduate governing body of the college. Harold hurried along, striving to ap-

pear unaware of the curious, amused, slightly bored eyes that followed him from the white-flanneled worthies lolling upon the benches. He was glad when he reached the head of the narrow street that, according to Joe's directions, must be Clark.

At that moment one of Burnham's delivery trucks seemed to be blocking the whole street. Beyond the automobile, however, he could glimpse two rows of small white houses all practically alike. They were dwellings of rather ancient vintage, each with a dinky front porch reached by four railed steps up from the sidewalk. Harold took a few paces down the street and then paused uncertainly. He wondered if even on this modest street he could secure accommodations fitting to his modest purse. Of the $485 saved from three Summers' sales of washing machines he had brought $200, leaving the rest in the Sanford bank for emergency use. His pocket also contained the $165 in commissions he had earned the past Summer, plus $200 of the $330 secured from Uncle Peter. For he had been forced to spend $130 for clothes, other supplies and a ticket from Sanford to Tate. Five hundred and sixty-five dollars to last him a whole year at college. No spendthrift's income that!

As he was debating, a brisk little feminine

figure turned the corner on the other side of Clark Street and walked rapidly down the narrow thoroughfare. If she had seen Harold, she did not acknowledge his presence. But he had recognized her and, crossing the street, impulsively followed her. She was the girl of the dining car, the pretty brunette whom Johnny Niles had addressed as "Peggy." Harold saw her mount the steps of one of the tiny houses about halfway down the street and disappear inside the front door.

That put a different aspect upon matters! If Clark Street was good enough for "Peggy," it was certainly good enough for "Speedy" Lamb. Harold had made a careful note of the residence that now had the pleasure of sheltering her. He was delighted, upon approaching it, to observe a sign tacked to the newel post at the bottom of the porch steps: "Furnished Rooms. $3 Per Week." He bounded up the steps and pushed the bell.

If Harold expected the dining-car vision to answer his ring, he was disappointed. A tired-eyed middle-aged woman with a dust cap tied around her hair and a broom in her hand opened the door and stood expectantly.

Harold looked his disappointment. But he managed to say, "I came about the room. Is it rented?"

"No-o," replied the lady in a thin voice as

if reluctant to admit it. "But you're a student, aren't you?"

"Yes," he admitted. "A Freshman."

She acted as though this were worse than ever.

"I wouldn't be a bit of trouble to you," Harold hastened to explain.

"Well," said the lady, "I don't usually rent to students. They're too noisy and my nerves aren't what they used to be. I'm accustomed to having professors or graduate students. But you look like a quiet boy. Would you like to look at the room?"

He followed her into the house and down the entrance hall, peeking surreptitiously into the living room leading off from the hall. But the girl wasn't there. The dust-cap lady led him up two narrow flights of stairs. Then she opened a door upon a small third-floor bedroom in the front of the house. The room evidently had not been used all summer and was hot and close. It was meagerly furnished with an iron bed, a washstand, a small desk against the wall, a dresser, two chairs and some pictures of an earlier day entitled "The Children's Hour" and "Towser's Dinner." The room appeared strangely dark, although it was a bright day outside. The landlady hastened to remark that this was due to the fact that she had been just cleaning the win-

dows and had not as yet wiped off the soap.

"If you decide to take the room, I'll send my daughter right up to finish the windows," she offered. And from the regions below Harold could hear a piano being played with a light, deft touch. In that moment the bargain was as good as made.

The price was three dollars a week. He would have considered it cheap at twice that.

The lady of the house, he learned, was named Sayre—Mrs. Sayre. The daughter, then—if indeed she was the daughter—was Peggy Sayre. It struck him as a very nice name for a very nice girl.

When the landlady had departed, Harold proceeded to pull off his sweater and make himself at home. He gazed down at his shirt and discovered that it was a mess. Not only was it covered with splotches of dirt, but several bad rents marred its appearance. That kitten! Harold walked over to the bureau in search of a pin with which to effect temporary repairs. An empty pin cushion met his eye. And, as fate would have it, the cushion was in the shape of a kitten. Harold vexedly picked it up and thrust it roughly into the bureau drawer.

He would have to mend those holes. He remembered that his mother had particularly warned him to take care of his clothes. She

had even provided him with a homemade sewing outfit. He fished this gear out of his suitcase and sat down in the dilapidated Morris chair and set to work awkwardly with needle and thread. This was a new sort of task for Harold and he did not do very well with it. At almost the first push of the needle through the cloth his hand slipped. The needle met Harold's chin, bent low over his toil, and inflicted a gash. He arose and walked over to the mirror hanging over his washstand to inspect his cut and staunch the trickle of blood. The glass in the mirror was soaped just as were the windows. Harold took out his handkerchief and wiped a portion of it clear.

Then suddenly he stopped and stared incredulously.

Framed in the cleaned part of the mirror was reflected a pretty feminine face in a ravishing setting of brown curls. The prettiest girl Harold had ever seen. Harold turned and stared rapturously at Peggy Sayre, who stood uncertainly in the doorway. A dream had come true! Dazedly he pointed at her, as if to fix the fact that it was really she. And, strangely enough, the amazed girl was pointing at him too. It was as if he was asking mutely and gladly, "You?" And she was replying similarly, "You?" Standing there

inquiringly, a mop and a pail and a broom by her side, he thought she was the most attractive girl in the world.

He was desperately afraid she would go and hastened to say, "I—er—took this little room so I'd have a quiet place to hide away and study."

He did not want her to know that he had seen her as she walked down Clark Street and had rented her mother's room as a consequence.

"Mother sent me up to clean the windows," she said with an effort at matter-of-factness. She picked up her washing implements and came into the room. Then she caught sight of his torn shirt and wounded chin. "But you've torn your clothes and hurt your face!" she cried sympathetically. "Is there anything I can do to help you?"

He hesitated. The cut was trivial and he now obliterated any evidence of it with his handkerchief.

"Would you like me to repair your shirt for you?" she inquired.

"That would be fine," he exulted. "You can sit right over there."

He led her to the Morris chair and handed her the sewing kit. He seated himself on the arm of the chair and watched her deft, white fingers closing the gaping holes in his gar-

ment. His head was bent low over her. She was so adorable. He mentally traced the soft curve of her chin. He could catch the faint perfume of her hair. It was wonderful. Fate had been marvelously kind to lead him to this room. And to lead her there too.

She was sewing a loose button on his shirt now. She was almost finished. He hastily tried to think of ways to detain her further. If he could only find more buttons for her to sew—!

He slyly pulled another button from his shirt. Then he took the scissors from the near-by table and boldly cut a whole row of buttons from his vest, which he had tossed upon a near-by chair. If she detected any of this stratagem, she did not admit it, but kept on patiently sewing whatever he handed her.

When at last there was no further subterfuge with which to hold her, he began to worry about what he must say to her. He must apologize for that incident in the train. He must explain why the kindly old lady had mistaken them for sweethearts. (The word made him feel all warm and pleasant inside now.) He must tell her why he had run out of the car away from her.

Finally he cleared his throat. "Miss Sayre, I just want to say that that thing on the train was just a misunderstanding. I didn't mean

to embarrass you. I—er—just want to say that."

She was biting the thread off with bent head and even white teeth. He saw to his relief that her eyes were twinkling with merriment.

"Oh, I've forgotten that long ago," she declared. "I was confused at first because that lady was grinning at us so. But I realize how we must have sounded. It *was* funny, wasn't it? Imagine!"

She laughed merrily. He joined her. The ice was broken.

"You live here, don't you?" he asked hopefully.

"Why, yes," she replied. "My mother owns this house. Since father died two years ago she's been letting out this room."

He questioned her discreetly further and learned a lot. Her name was indeed Peggy Sayre. She had graduated from Tate High School the June previous and had had to give up plans to enter Wellesley College on account of the sudden death of her father. Instead she had taken a position at the Hotel Tate. She was to have charge of the cigar counter and the cloakroom. She had been visiting a relative in Indiana. Yes, she knew many students, having lived in Tate all her life. Chester Trask? She knew him. Yes, he was, probably, the most popular man in

college. Dave Keay? Was he a thin boy, very well dressed and with light hair parted in the middle? Ye-es, she believed she had met him last year at the Fall Frolic. Sheldon? Garrity? Were they the two who had been suspended last spring for a month for stealing the bell-clapper in the tower of Webster Hall? Harold said he was sure they were too nice a pair of chaps to do that. And Peggy replied, "Oh, some Freshman always steals the clapper every year. It's a point of honor to do it. Most of them, though, are too clever to get caught."

Then Peggy suddenly arose and said guiltily that she must be going. She promised, however, that there would be plenty of opportunities to talk over Tate University later.

When she had gone, the room seemed again to have become drab and uninviting, even though the sun was now pouring warmly in through the two front windows. He fingered the places she had repaired and pronounced the job perfectly executed. He whistled merrily. If there had been the slightest doubt in Harold's mind but that Mrs. Sayre's third-story room was the finest abode in Tate, it had now vanished utterly.

Completing his toilet and donning fresh linen, Harold consulted his Freshman Bible. It occurred to him that possibly he was re-

quired to announce his presence in Tate in some official way. The little leather-bound guide book confirmed this idea. He walked over to Webster Hall, on the campus, and joined the mob of his bewildered classmates outside the door marked "Registrar's Office." Having stood in line there for half an hour, he finally was ushered into the presence of a fat-faced, worried-looking little man behind an enormous desk. The latter asked him questions in an irritated tone of voice and entered his pedigree on a card.

"All right," said the Registrar impatiently, having concluded his scribbling.

He handed Harold an enormous folio of closely printed white paper. "Here's your schedule of classes. They begin to-morrow. Look in the main entry of Cowan Hall for your divisions and their meeting places. Good Luck, Lamb. Trust you'll be a credit to us. Next man."

When Harold returned to the group of waiting Freshmen outside, some of them were grumbling that they would lose their dinners if they had to hang around there much longer. "Where do we eat, anyway?" a fat cherub asked. Harold, with an air of importance, volunteered the information that Freshman meals were served down at the University Commons, a huge dining hall that could be

seen from the windows of Webster Hall. Peggy had told him this.

Having attained the open air, Harold decided that he was hungry himself. Accordingly he walked down the gravel path to the Commons and entered with the stream that was already flowing through the big double doors in search of sustenance. He came upon a vast region of clattering dishes, Freshmen absorbing food and negro waiters shuffling about. There seemed to be few, if any, empty tables. Around the festive board nearest him three slickly brushed young gentlemen were chatting quietly as they awaited the arrival of their order. Harold thought he recognized them. Yes, he did. All three of them had been huddled with him back stage in the auditorium that afternoon. Bred in the easy democracy of a middle west small town, where to see an empty chair at a table is to occupy it, Harold approached and made himself a fourth at their meal.

The three young gentlemen abruptly ceased their conversation to stare at him. They did not at first fancy his presence there too much.

"Hello, fellows," he said, a little abashed, "I see you found the restaurant too."

The trio hesitated, looking at each other. Then one of them broke the ice with a doubtful "Hello. Trask is my name."

Harold regarded him with doubled interest. Yes, he looked like a less mature edition of the great Chester.

"Brother of Chester Trask?" Harold asked.

"Why, yes," admitted the diner. "My name's Leonard. Have you met my brother?"

"I should say I have," Harold replied heartily. "We had a great time in Cleveland together when he was out there this Spring."

"Is that so?" the younger Trask said with greatly increased cordiality. "Well, I'm mighty pleased to meet any friend of my brother's. This is Joe Bartlett and this red-headed chap is Don Haddon. And your name's—"

"Lamb. Harold Lamb."

"Oh, yes, I remember now. You're the chap who knocked 'em dead with the jig this afternoon. The one they all started calling 'Speedy.'"

Trask spoke with the careful accent that one acquires at our more frightfully expensive preparatory schools. His friends, when later they joined in the conversation, affected the same aristocratic drawl. They were extremely well groomed, rather supercilious youngsters. If Tate took some of the conceit out of them, as colleges have the habit of doing, given half a chance, they might turn into worthy citizens of the better as well as

richer class. If, on the other hand, their present tendencies were coddled, their chances of flunking out of Tate before the end of Freshman year and developing into loafers, mere decorations for the society pages of the Sunday newspapers, were excellent.

As young Trask identified Harold as the effervescent "Speedy," the other two youths at the table took a vastly increased interest in him. They, however, seemed to regard him as more of a curiosity, an object of amusement, than as an equal. Harold, in his innocence, did not get this. His whole conception of the "Speedy" episode was that he had made a big hit, that the entire university was ready now to receive him with open arms. Moreover, he was making preparations to live up to the name of "Speedy." If popularity meant treating the whole college to ice cream daily, he would do it. Probably that was the way Chester Trask had got where he was. It was undoubtedly a Tate habit of recognizing a good fellow by eating ice cream at his expense.

"Where did you prep, Lamb?" Leonard Trask was asking him suavely.

"Sanford High School," Harold replied, and wondered why for the first time in his life he was a little ashamed of it.

"We three prepped at Westover," offered

Joe Bartlett, a wizened lad with a rather mean little face set in a peanut head.

Harold knew Westover by reputation. The bare tuition there, the story ran, was two thousand dollars a year, exclusive of board or any extras. And one had to come of Westover ancestors and be enrolled at birth in order to enter. It was the *crème de la crème* of preparatory schools for lads born with golden spoons in their mouths. Harold's three dinner companions acted as if they were quite aware of this and were anxious for him to be impressed. In this they were not disappointed. Quite abashed, he said hardly a word the rest of the meal. The trio talked among themselves about others of their prep school cronies who were in the Freshman class. They blithely ignored Harold, beyond casting curious, half-smirking glances at him every now and then. The four rose together at the end of the meal and walked out into the September moonlight.

"Beastly meal," commented Donald Haddon in carefully clipped accents. "It's an outrage that we have to take our meals there."

"Blame Leonard here," suggested Bartlett, only half joking. "He persuaded us to come to Tate instead of going to Harvard."

"Oh, quit your crabbing, you two," Leonard Trask laughed. "You're acting like a

couple of spoiled darlings. And put out that cigarette, Joe. You know darned well Freshmen are not supposed to smoke on the streets."

"Bother the fool regulations," Bartlett exclaimed. "Now at other colleges they allow a man to do exactly as he chooses. He can drink or smoke anywhere about the place to his heart's content."

"Believe me, Joe, you will have all the chance you want to become an ass here without going anywhere else, if you want it," Leonard commented rather sharply. He had much better stuff in him than either of his two companions, though his character had its weakness and was dominated at times by his more worldly-wise companions. Bartlett and Haddon came of New York society families. They had traveled extensively, were familiar with the vices and mannerisms of Europe, were cosmopolitans at the age of eighteen. Though Trask's father was wealthy, he came of rather staid Boston Back Bay stock. His two friends frequently irritated him, but he rather envied them their worldly-wiseness and deferred to them at times.

Harold walked down University Steet with the Westover graduates as far as Clark Street and then said, "I'll say good-by to you fellows here. I live down this street. Hope to see you again some time."

"Same here," said Leonard Trask promptly. "We're all three rooming together in Maury's Private Dorm on Hill Place. Number 15. Drop around."

Harold thanked him and said that he would, though he secretly doubted it. He did not feel comfortable with these pseudoaristocrats. Leonard Trask, he conceded, might be all right alone. He *must* be all right. Wasn't he a brother of the great Chester?

Harold saw no signs of Peggy as he walked through the front hall of the Sayre house and up to his room. He surmised correctly that she was on duty at the Hotel Tate. However, he was not to want for company. Hardly had he closed his room door and settled into the less rickety of his two chairs when there was a knock on the door. Harold called out, "Come in," in true middle western fashion. A tall old-young man, bareheaded and with a wisp of straw-colored hair in his eyes, walked briskly into the room. He had a bundle under his arm. A rectangular bundle, thin but of large dimensions. He slowly and impressively denuded it of its crackling wrapping paper and revealed a large framed reproduction of a lion showing its teeth in a most unfriendly manner. An artist might have branded the picture a crude reproduc-

tion of a very crude original. But Harold was quite impressed.

"You a Freshman?" asked the stranger cheerfully.

"Yes," Harold admitted, wondering what was coming next.

"Well, my name's Parsons. Parsons '25. Senior, you know. Pleased to meet you. See that picture? Isn't it a dandy? Lion's the Tate mascot, you know. This lion was particularly posed for this picture. The official Tate lion picture. Everybody's got one in his room. Old Pennypacker himself has one in his private study. 'S fact. You aren't a Tate man till you have a lion picture. No, sir. What do you think this work of art costs, hey? Looks like about fifteen bucks' worth, doesn't it? Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I like Freshmen. Once one myself. Special reduction for to-night only to members of the Freshman class. Three dollars and a half. Can't deliver the picture to-night, of course. Only got this sample to show. I get them special from a prominent art gallery on Fifth Avenue, New York. They're private agents for the painter. By the way, the painter's a very prominent artist. Yes, sir. You'd recognize him in a second if I told you his name. One of America's best.

Just paints these lions as a hobby. What do you say? Three bucks and a half—and cheap at twice the price. Sign here."

The salesman had reeled all this off with the speed and facility of a Coney Island barker. After such a display of pep and elocution, Harold could not turn him down. Besides, it was a fine, upstanding, fire-eating lion. He signed in a daze. Parsons '25, having given him a receipt for his three dollars and a half, breezed out as quickly as he had sailed in.

Hardly had his footsteps stopped echoing down the hall when there was a second knock at Harold's door. A swarthy youth with a flaming red tie answered the invitation to come in. He approached Harold waving a narrow book.

"Take your subscription for the Tate 'Tattler,'" sang out the newcomer. "Five bucks a year. Everybody has to take it. Has all the university notices as well as news of the campus and the world at large. Sign here."

Of course he wanted the "Tattler," Harold thought. He signed. The solicitor swung out of the room with a hurried "Thanks. Good night."

The "Tattler" had the best graft of all the campus salesmen, the college was agreed. You had to take the "Tattler." Else you

might accidentally miss reading the notice the one morning of your four years in college that your professor was ill and was not holding his class!

Following in rapid succession after the lion-picture and "Tattler" salesmen, came undergraduate tradesmen offering athletic supplies, the "Tate Totem Pole," season ticket to the football games, the services of the University Laundry (including free laundry box), a handsome framed reproduction of Kipling's "If," coupons good for twenty shines at the Student Shoe Shining Parlors, coupons good for twenty pants-presses at the Student Pressing Plant, Freshman caps ("the regulation uniform after to-day, Freshman. Better buy one"), Freshman corduroy trousers, Freshman black sweater, and the official Freshman pipe with 2T9 inlaid in the bowl.

And Harold patronized them all. He listened, completely awed, to their polished line. He thought he was duty-bound to buy.

Finally, around ten o'clock, when he was wondering how many more of these itinerant merchants would discover his room, he extended another invitation to enter in response to a knock at the door. And gazed upon the blinking presence of Thomas Barrington ("Shelley") Logan. Dave Keay's friend had a copy of a rather highbrow-looking maga-

zine under his arm. He leafed its pages hesitantly under Harold's nose. Near-sighted, he had not recognized Harold.

"Shelley" swung rather falteringly into his line. He was not good at this sort of business. All the Tate Literary Monthly editorial board were required to dash out among the Freshmen and rustle up subscriptions. The entering men were almost their only prospects. The other students would sooner flunk out than be caught with the "Lit" on their study tables.

"I represent the Tate Literary Monthly. Only purely literary review published here," Logan attempted to rattle it off. "Publishes all the good stuff written at Tate. You'll want to write for it yourself. No Freshman can get along without the 'Lit.' Two dollars and a half. Ten issues."

Harold already had his pocketbook out. Had only been waiting to learn how much more money would be required. Suddenly Logan got a square look at his victim. What he saw was a pathetically eager, bewildered, innocent face. The face of a Freshman who has been steadily mulcted for three hours and has been paying out oodles of cash for junk that he would probably never use. The most pitiful sight in the world—a man who is too badly cowed to say "No." Logan knew the

look so well. He remembered having possessed it himself four years previously. He had been seeing it on the faces of Freshmen all evening. He was pretty thoroughly sick of this soliciting business. It was not as if he were selling these poor kids something they needed. Only one man in a hundred liked the "Lit." The rest would glance at the first copy and throw the remaining numbers, unopened, into their waste baskets.

He blinked at Harold, stared more closely and asked, "Did you come out from Cleveland with Dave Keay and me?"

"Yes," Harold replied eagerly.

"Sure you did. I remember. Well, listen, Freshman, forget what I just said. You don't want the 'Lit.' Here's your money back."

Harold was inclined to protest. Sure, he wanted the "Lit." He wanted all the publications. He was anxious to get the "Lit" especially. Didn't Logan edit it? Well—

But Logan was obdurate. He would not accept him as a subscriber. He did accept Harold's invitation to take the other chair for a few minutes.

"Have you been bothered much to-night with fellows selling stuff?" asked the Senior. Harold nodded a vigorous affirmative. Logan continued, "You want to be very careful or they'll take every nickel you've got.

There'll be more to-morrow night and for the rest of this week. It's the same every year. The trouble is that most of them are selling plain junk. Parsons nicked you for one of those terrible lions? I thought so. He's been paying his way through college with those awful things for three years now. He buys the picture for fifty cents in New York, and gets 'Cheap George,' the picture-framer here in town, to stick a frame around it for fifty cents more. Two dollars and a half profit. Not bad. The rest of the salesmen are just as generous. They all figure that somebody has to sting Freshmen, so it might as well be they. The only thing you bought that's worth anything to you is the 'Tattler.' You almost have to subscribe to that. If you were living in a dormitory room there'd be two or three nervy Sophomores around by this time selling you your radiator and the paper on your wall. You can be thankful you've escaped that. Well, I must be running along. I've stuck fifty of your poor classmates for subscriptions to the 'Lit.' That's my quota for this evening."

He smiled lugubriously at Harold, arose from his chair and departed.

And the next night Harold again bought everything in sight from the campus gold-brick peddlers.

CHAPTER VIII

"I HAVE a fine room and am very comfortable," Harold wrote to his mother the next night. "Mrs. Sayre, my landlady, is very nice. You would like her. Her daughter is nice too. Just like Sanford folks. I have met most of my classmates and they seem to like me. I like them too. I have also met a number of upperclassmen. They came around to see me and made sure I bought the right kind of things. I have put my money in the bank here. There is one right on the corner. I have spent quite a lot of money already, but I have not been extravagant. A fellow has to get started right here. It takes a little money to do that."

He wandered into the plush-lined lobby of the Hotel Tate after dinner the night following, hoping to see Peggy. The Tate was a frightfully expensive place that offered food, lodgings and service vastly inferior to the prices it charged, Harold had been informed. The hotel was overornate, making an attempt to be New Yorkish and not knowing quite how. He with difficulty caught sight of Peggy behind the cigar counter. She was smiling as she handed out a box of stogies to

a group of bantering Tatians on the other side of the counter. Many wealthy upperclassmen who for some reason or other were not members of fraternities took their meals at the Tate. Three or four of these were now being beguiled by the smile of Peggy. It was strictly business with Peggy, but Harold was deceived. He wondered if she was, after all, just a flirt. He walked out of the lobby without speaking to her, though she saw him at the last minute and waved to him to come over. His back was turned, however, and he never knew he had been observed.

He sought his room and, picking up the new set of text books just purchased at the University Store, selected the volume on trigonometry and started to study.

The Tate professors that opening day somewhat awed and puzzled Harold, accustomed to the dry-as-dust disciplinarians of the Sanford High School. The teachers here seemed to take so much for granted. They had a habit of skimming over things hurriedly in the classroom with the remark, "You men can puzzle that out for yourselves when you get to your rooms." There was none of the elaborate explaining and interchange of question and answer that the High School teachers deemed essential. Here the profs delivered lectures, evidently memorized long

A Harold Lloyd Corp. Production—A Pathé Picture. *The Freshman.*

"JUST BE YOURSELF, HAROLD—AND YOU'LL WIN!"

since and repeated year after year, in sing-songy voices. One either took notes or didn't, as one chose. The classes were warned, however, that there would be stiff monthly tests to see how well the lectures had been absorbed by the listeners.

Harold found it somewhat bewildering. There was Dr. MacDonald, the trigonometry professor, who talked with such a Scottish burr that one could hardly distinguish one word from the other. He had a confusing habit of abbreviating everything, saying "coss" for "cosine" and "tang" for "tangent." As one of Harold's fellow classmen put it at the end of the first period, "Well, wouldn't that jar you? If that bird doesn't begin to talk English pretty soon, we're all sunk."

Then there was young Mr. Stoddard, the French instructor, a lanky ex-Rhodes scholar from Oxford. Stoddard didn't take his teaching seriously and was continually looking for ways of alleviating the tedium of his routine. He discovered one upon consulting the roll and finding Harold and a sad-faced farmer's son from South Dakota named Lyon in his class. Blithely disregarding the alphabetical order in which the classes were usually arranged, Stoddard put Harold in the first seat and Lyon in the last and then expected the roomful to be convulsed every morning when

he called the roll and made the remark that the class "came in like a Lamb and went out like a Lyon."

Crashaw, the physics lecturer, was the one who made the public remark about Harold's speech on the opening day from the auditorium stage and started the grinning faces of the other four hundred Freshmen in the lecture hall twisting Harold's way. Crashaw was a fat, ruddy little man noted for his profanity, his severity in marking and his frank, rough treatment of students. Coming to Harold's name in the roll call, he paused and drawled, "We are honored to have the self-proclaimed 'Speedy' in our presence. I trust we shall be able to treat him in this course with the rapidity to which he is accustomed." Harold did not know whether he had been complimented or insulted. Few of his classmates knew either. They laughed from policy and stared from curiosity. And Harold turned very red.

As that hectic first week at Tate drew to a close, Harold was on the whole well pleased with himself. He was getting along. He had been too busy so far to get lonely. Moreover, his classmates seemed to fancy his company. They would cluster around him and he found it very easy to make them laugh. His most trivial remarks brought guffaws.

He did not appreciate the mirth-provoking qualities of his Sanford accent and his rustic phraseology. Nor the stage-comedian effect of his appearance, what with his white turtle-neck sweater, his tiny Freshman cap perched upon the back of his head and his thick-lensed glasses with their immense tortoise-shell rims. He was continually piloting crowds to the Palace and blowing them to ice cream. His guests included not only Freshmen but also Sophomore friends of Sheldon and Garrity, the inseparable duo that claimed the credit for discovering "Speedy." Harold's greeting of new acquaintances with his funny little jig step, his Lester Laurel pose and his low-sweeping handshake became one of the sure-fire laughs of the Tate campus.

The first fortnight of college was an harassed period for the whole Freshman class. It was open season for hazing and the Sophomores were taking full advantage of their opportunities. Harold was possibly the favorite subject for this peculiarly collegiate notion of outdoor sport. There was always a shout of approval when a group of Sophomore scouts seeking victims nabbed him and brought him into the circle. He rowed stroke oar on a crew that sat in single file on the grass and used toothpicks for oars. He whistled "Yankee Doodle" with his nose plastered

against that of another Freshman. He perched up in a tree opposite one of his classmates similarly situated and yelled "Katy did" while the other youth responded with "Katy didn't." This for ten solid minutes. He marched in innumerable hazing parades with his trousers rolled to his knees and his garters draped around his ears. In these processions there was always a leader who intoned erudite slogans such as "I'm the Sultan!" while the others in line shouted back, "We're his harem!"

But by the end of the second week, hazing was officially over, by edict of the Senior Council, and Harold's life slid into more of a rational routine. Standing outside of the main entrance of Commons after luncheon on Saturday, he discovered that for the first time since arriving at Tate he was alone and with nothing to do. This struck him as all wrong. If he wanted to get along, if he ever expected to be a big man like Chester Trask, he mustn't idle. He was making friends hand over fist. He must keep it up, strike while the iron was hot, no matter if these first two weeks had seemed to cost him a fearful lot of money.

His eyes shifted to a shiny new runabout that had drawn up to the curb in front of Commons. He recognized the occupants as

Leonard Trask and Joe Bartlett, with the latter at the wheel. They were poking their heads out from under the top of the car, evidently looking for somebody. Harold made a gesture of greeting, but they either failed to see him or chose to ignore him. He flushed. It was slowly dawning upon him that there was something snobbish about these Westover graduates.

Then he heard Joe yell, "Hey, Don. Come on! We're waiting for you."

Harold turned to see young Haddon coming down the steps of Commons with two other Freshmen whom he did not know. At the sight of his friends, Haddon deserted his two companions without a word and, taking the rest of the steps in a single leap, jumped into the car with Leonard and Joe. With a roar and a spurt of black smoke out of its muffler, the powerful little car was off. Haddon's two deserted classmates stood staring after him, a look of chagrin upon their faces.

"They're prep school pals of his," Harold ventured to explain.

"He might have been a little more civil about ducking away from us," complained one of the boys.

"Probably they're going down to Lakeport and don't want to miss any of the fun," said the other. "Gee, it would be nice to drive

down there and get a nice swim, eh? Some guys have all the luck."

"What's Lakeport?" Harold asked, interested.

Lakeport, it was explained to him, was a summer resort settlement on the shores of Lake Preston, fifteen miles from Tate. It had hotels, bath houses, cottages, a Casino and wonderfully nice sandy beaches leading into clear, cool water. One reached this Paradise by private car or by hiring a vehicle down at Thompson's Garage. The Freshman authority on Lakeport said he had lived in Tate all his life. His name was Talbott, his friend's name was Carter and what was Harold's name?

"Well, why don't we hire a car and drive down there, if it's such a wonderful place?" Harold asked. He believed at that moment that it was the regular custom at Tate for the undergraduate body to spend Saturday afternoons at Lakeport. He remembered now to have heard other groups discussing the prospects of a swim there. He seemed to have heard somebody mention girls and dancing in this connection also.

Harold turned as he distinguished somebody hailing him. The hailer was Dan Sheldon, who with the ever-present pal, Garrity, was joshing a bevy of Freshmen down under

the elms of University Street. It might have occurred to a more astute observer than Harold that Sheldon spent a great deal of time alternately playing practical jokes upon Freshmen and impressing them with his knowledge of things Tatian. Also that Sheldon had a weak, rather foxlike face and was not popular with his own class.

"Ah, there, 'Speedy,' " Sheldon now hailed, "what's on the cards for this afternoon?" The question seemed to imply that the asker craved diversion and was hinting that the Freshman should provide it.

"We were talking about hiring a car and riding down to Lakeport," Harold complied.

"Good stuff," Sheldon agreed and came over and took hold of Lamb's coat sleeve. "Come along. I'll show you where you can get a car." His satellite Garrity fell in line with the other four and they hurried down University Street toward Thompson's Garage.

Jake Thompson came to the surface from under the automobile with which he was tinkering. His grease-smeared face made movements and his lips said that Lakeport and return would cost them ten dollars, with five dollars of this fee returned when the rented car was safely brought back.

"Aw, Jake, have a heart," protested Shel-

don. "Did I ever fail to bring one of your pieces of junk back safely?"

"Yes," said Jake shortly. "Once."

Harold had expected that the others, of course, would chip in with him to pay for the car hire. But none of them made a move to accept or decline Jake's offer. He looked around vainly at their blank faces.

The Freshman gulped and then he said weakly, "Well, that sounds all right to me. We'll take a car."

"I'll drive her," Sheldon offered at once.

"I ought to raise the price then," Jake opined grimly. He walked over to a second-hand touring car and said, "This is her." But he did not permit them to enter the veteran vehicle until Harold had handed over ten dollars and received the receipt.

Sheldon proved to be a fast and reckless driver. They sped over ten or more macadam miles of scenery as flat and uninteresting as Harold's native landscape. The roads were clogged with cars, and Harold, seated in the front seat beside the nonchalant driver, saw eternity loom up before his affrighted eyes many times. But in about thirty minutes they entered the corporate limits of Lakeport as evidenced by the mammoth sign, "Welcome to Lakeport. The Lake Breeze Metropolis." Another five minutes and they were in sight

of the sandy beach and the sparkling waters beyond. They parked the car and embarked in search of excitement.

It was an unusually warm afternoon for the end of September and the unanimous vote was for a swim at once.

"We can get bathing suits at Bailey's," offered Talbott, who was just recovering from being flung about the tonneau of the car during the fast ride over. "I worked there one summer drying towels. Maybe I can get us suits for nothing."

But Talbott's optimism proved groundless. Mr. Bailey was not in and the hatchet-faced woman in the office did not recall Talbott's former connection with the Bailey bathhouses. Nevertheless they all undressed in high glee in adjoining coops and donned badly fitting bathing suits. Harold's was in particular an abominable fit. He had a hard time keeping up with the others as they raced through the crowds littering the soft white sand down to the waves.

Talbott, Carter and Garrity proved to be water rats. They dived and swam like young porpoises, whooping it up in great style. Sheldon took a single dip and then confined his activities to ogling the girls on the sand. Harold, never keen for the water, plunged bravely in, but found the warm waves almost

nauseating. He thereafter stayed near Sheldon.

"No class to the chickens here," that worthy complained. "All the nifty ones go to Spray Cove, up at the other end of the lake. This joint gets only the factory girls and small-towners. Say, some day we'll get one of Jake's swell 'busses and go to Spray Cove for some real fun."

At that moment he slid down beside two girls of about eighteen years each arrayed in flaming red bathing suits and sprawling idly out on the sand. Both had the usual city pallor and were quite evidently of not a very high social status.

Sheldon grinned boldly into the face of the one nearer him and greeted her effusively, "Well, imagine meeting you here! I haven't seen you since the Union State game. And your little friend here too! Well, well. Take a seat, 'Speedy.'"

Harold sat down awkwardly beside the other girl. He really believed Sheldon knew them until both girls turned the cold shoulder to the audacious Sophomore.

"Oh, come on, be nice to us, sisters," Sheldon cajoled. "We're just a couple of big bicycle men from Wheeling up to see the fair."

The girls giggled and one of them ventured,

"You're college boys, ain't you?" Her voice was raspy and unattractive.

"Discovered!" Sheldon howled. "Well, to tell the truth, I'm Coach Cavendish of the Tate football team and this is our star quarterback, 'Speedy' Lamb. I've got three of the other varsity players with me. I thought the boys were getting a little stale, so I brought 'em down to give 'em a bath apiece. Do you mind if they use a little of your lake?"

But he got no further, for at that moment two hulking young men looking like blacksmiths appeared in front of them from the direction of the water. The newcomers, it was plain to be seen, belonged with the girls and were scowling at Sheldon and Harold, the intruders.

"These guys friends of yours?" growled one of the blacksmiths.

The girls had cooled remarkably toward the collegians. The one who had addressed Sheldon now turned upon him icily and said primly, "I should say not. They're just a couple of fresh guys that tried to pick us up."

"Our exit cue," muttered Sheldon to Harold and, leaping nimbly to his feet, ducked into the beach crowd. Harold followed as rapidly as he could, bewildered by the whole incident.

"That's what we get for mixing with the delicatessen trade," commented Sheldon airily. "Pick 'em right or don't pick 'em at all—that's my slogan from now on."

When the quintet from Tate had donned their street clothes again, Sheldon having provided diversion in the bathhouses by snapping the bare bodies of the others with his stinging wet towel, they sallied forth upon the crowded beach in search of further adventure. Sheldon amused them for a while by pinning on a Tate Town Gas Inspector badge, filched from somewhere, and pretending to be the officially appointed inspector of bathing suits. He would stand off and measure the length of some innocent person's bathing suit, then gravely approach him and inform him that he was guilty of violating the Lakeport regulations. In nine cases out of ten the victim looked frightened and fled for his bathhouse amid the roars of Sheldon's companions. Harold, strangely enough, did not catch the humor in this. Sheldon's practical jokes all seemed to share the quality of being slightly cruel.

They adjourned to the merry-go-round and took several whirls. To the discomfiture of the carousel proprietor, Sheldon produced a brass ring two rides out of three and was given a free encircling every time as a reward. Till

he was detected pulling duplicate brass rings out of his pocket and the Tatians had to flee for their lives. Sheldon had spotted the rings in a box in the merry-go-round ticket office and, diverting the attention of the cashier elsewhere, had calmly purloined them.

Along about six o'clock, the group of merrymakers, having spent the afternoon in the fresh air and water, grew hungry. Talbott proposed that they dine at the Hotel Benton, Lakeport's newest and most expensive hostelry. When Carter protested that there probably wasn't enough money among the five put together to pay for the meals, Sheldon, who was feeling in excellent form, reassured them, "Just watch me handle the checks and it won't cost us a cent."

So they invaded the aristocratic dining room of the Benton and ate a full course dinner apiece. Having received separate checks, they looked toward Sheldon for the next move.

"Don't pay the waiter. Pick up your check and follow me," he ordered. The four, mystified but hopeful, trailed behind the bold Sophomore as he approached the stony-faced man behind the cashier's wicket.

"Put it on my room bill," said Sheldon in his haughtiest manner to the cashier and, flipping down the check, sailed augustly by. The three youths after him, quaking inwardly,

followed his example. But by the time Harold, the last man in line, had reached his window, the cashier had recovered his poise.

"Wait a minute," he said sharply to the Freshman. "You people are not guests here. I've had this game worked on me before. Now pay up or I'll call the house detective."

Harold looked around for his friends, but they had completely disappeared. There was nothing else to do but pay all five of the checks, leaving him with scarcely ten dollars out of the twenty that he had brought to Lakeport.

When he had rejoined the others outside Sheldon consoled him by saying, "You've got to work faster, 'Speedy,' to get along in this town."

At Sheldon's suggestion, they invaded the Casino, where a jazz band was blaring and perspiring dancers were gyrating around the floor in numbers that approached the saturation point. Here the breezy Sophomore actually discovered two girls whom he knew. One was a blonde of uncertain age with frizzled bobbed hair and rather faded good looks. The other was slightly younger.

"Gosh, if it isn't the college widow," commented Sheldon and led his interested cohorts up to the belles, who were hovering unescorted on the edge of the dance floor.

"Grace, a salubrious evening to you," Sheldon bowed elaborately to the blonde. "May I present my gentlemen friends, Messieurs Lamb, Talbott, Carter and Clayton Bennington Garrity. Gentlemen—Miss Beach."

Grace Beach was the perfectly respectable daughter of the perfectly respectable leading paper-hanger of Tate, John Beach, and his colorless spouse. Grace had been a very pretty and modest girl in her day, which was about eight years before our story takes place. She was now twenty-six and her good looks were on the wane. She was suffering the fate of an erstwhile beauty who lives and has her social life in a college town. For ten years she had been escorted to dances and athletic games by Tate men. She had been engaged to a dozen of them. But when her fiancés graduated and left college, they seemed to have a discouraging habit of marrying other girls in other places. Grace was left behind.

Grace Beach was now trying to delude herself into believing that she was not confronting the specter of spinsterhood. She was only twenty-six, and yet already the younger brood of flappers in their 'teens were proving more attractive to Tate men than herself. Invitations to proms and football games came each year in fewer numbers. Grace had stepped out of her shell a little and became timidly

flirtatious. She could not bring herself to emulate the boldness and frankness of the modern flapper. But, in a thoroughly respectable and conventional way, she had resolved not to be left out of Tate's social whirl, such as it was.

During the past week she had invited her cousin, Delphine Smythe, a babyishly pretty girl about five years younger than Grace, to visit her. Delphine, a small-town maiden and frankly flirtatious, though most conventional, had been attracted by the prospect of so many young men gathered in one relatively small spot. She had accepted Grace's invitation and come to Tate, much to the annoyance of Grace's parents, who did not like this cousin.

Grace now smiled a mechanical smile that she had been using for many, many years. She introduced the boys to Delphine, who tittered. Sheldon and Garrity immediately claimed the ladies for a dance. The two Sophomores held their consorts with the current exaggerated collegiate dancing grip, postures that would at once cause a scandal if perpetrated in Sanford, Harold was sure. When the two Sophomores released the girls, apparently none the worse for wear, Talbott and Carter resumed the task of whirling them around the floor. Harold's turn found him simply not up to it. He felt that he must

A Harold Lloyd Corp. Production—A Pathé Picture.

The Freshman.

COACH CAVENDISH CALLS HAROLD INTO BATTLE.

learn to dance all over again before he ventured upon the floor another time.

"Thank my fluent tongue for the honor of these charming ladies' company on the long, lonely journey back to Tate," Sheldon announced glibly at about ten o'clock.

Half an hour later they started home, Grace squeezing in between Sheldon and Harold on the front seat and the other girl crowding into the tonneau. It soon developed that Miss Beach could talk the ears off a deaf man and was quite willing to do it. She and Sheldon exchanged repartee in the swift, slangy manner that was the custom at Tate and which Harold was sure he could never master. When Sheldon tired of her chatter and quieted down, on the pretense of paying stricter attention to his driving, she turned her conversational batteries upon Harold.

"I've heard of you," she smiled at him in the darkness. "You're that wonderfully generous boy they all call 'Speedy,' aren't you? I know you're going to be awfully popular. I don't suppose you'll ever have time to pay attention to poor little me."

She flooded him with further words. He detected her saying, among many other things, "I live with my parents down on Dinsmore Road. Perhaps you have already met my father. He's an interior decorator and often

advises the college boys about their rooms. My parents and I love to have the boys drop in and see us. We especially like Freshmen. They're so unspoiled."

Half an hour later they dropped Grace and her cousin at the Beach door. Harold was introduced to the "interior decorator," a thin, sad-looking man who was watering the tiny lawn in front of the house, though it was late at night.

Grace explained that her father was so rushed with work now that he couldn't find time for his household duties in conventional hours. She added with attempted coyness, "Do come and see us, please, Mr. Lamb."

He was quite elated. Then, for some reason, the image of pretty Peggy Sayre flashed into his head and he was thoughtful. Well, Peggy had had a flock of men around her the last time he had seen her. He guessed he could look at another woman if he liked. And Grace Beach seemed like a very friendly soul. She had said she liked him.

They drove the car around to Thompson's Garage and had to pound on the door and wake up the proprietor in order to get in. Jake sleepily inspected the ancient vehicle, saw that it was all right and returned Harold his five dollars.

It struck the Freshman as rather odd that

none of his companions had offered to share the expense of the trip with him. It made him a little uneasy too, for the afternoon's sport had cost him over fifteen dollars. His money was going with disturbing speed. He would have to economize.

CHAPTER IX

HAROLD'S uneasiness about his finances was somewhat eased the next Monday morning by the arrival of tangible evidence of his growing fame in the person of "Hap" Hopkins, one of the Freshman candidates for the position of official photographer on the Tate "Tattler" editorial board.

The "Tattler" had become aware of the fact a year previous that the American public dislikes to read if it can look at pictures instead. A deprecatory development that numerous big city newspapers have discovered and catered to with great profit. The "Tattler" had installed the practice of printing a double spread of pictures every Saturday. A photographer was added to the staff. As on all college papers, the real work of the "Tattler" was done by the various candidates for the editorial jobs. The literary giants already enjoying positions on the paper exercised merely supervisory duties and saw that the sweating aspirants slaved their heads off for the paper. When one was "out for the 'Tattler,' " one neither studied nor slept. No wonder two-thirds of the candidates dropped out

of the competition before its long hard course was half run.

"Hap" Hopkins was a thin, earnest, terrifically aggressive Freshman who was desperately determined to become photographer of the "Tattler" board. Armed with a huge camera, he went dashing around the campus, the town and the athletic fields "shooting" everything in sight. He got under the feet of the football players. He had earned the wrath of Dean Pennypacker by attempting to stop that dignified personage while he was horseback-riding on a bridlepath outside of Tate. Hopkins had leaped from behind a bush, snapping his shutter as he came and nearly frightening the dean's nag out of a year's growth.

Hopkins had witnessed "Speedy" Lamb's performance in the Tate auditorium. He had heard the campus talk about "Speedy" since that time. Particularly among the upperclassmen members of the "Tattler" board who did their loafing around the paper's offices in East Hall "Speedy" had been mentioned with frequency and laughter. The eccentric Freshman's habit of dancing a jig when introduced, his awkward attempts at popularity, his ice cream "blow-out" were very ludicrous to the sophisticated "Tattler" journalists. "Speedy" came perilously near, in their

estimation, to occupying the position of campus joke.

In "Hap" Hopkins' estimation, "Speedy" became news. A subject for a photograph. Hastening across the campus on the Monday following the Lakeport episode, Harold was stopped by the ambitious Hopkins, armed with his ubiquitous camera.

"Stand still a moment, please," Hopkins commanded. "Want to take your picture for the 'Tattler.'"

Harold was surprised but flattered. He stopped.

"Just go through that stuff you pulled at the auditorium, will you?" Hopkins requested. "You know, the jig and the handshake."

Harold was a little doubtful about this. During the past few days he had seemed to detect snickers when he performed this little Lester Laurel ritual, usually on request. Nevertheless he obliged Hopkins. As he struck the cocky posture at the end of the absurd jig, "Hap" "shot" him.

"When will it be in the paper?" Harold asked anxiously.

"Next Saturday morning," Hopkins, already on his way to other material, flung over his shoulder. As a matter of fact, the Freshman candidate had been deluging the "Tat-

tler" editors with three times as much stuff as they could possibly use and could guarantee the appearance of nothing.

Nevertheless, when Harold picked up his "Tattler" from the Sayre front porch on his way to breakfast the following Saturday and opened at once to the pictorial section, he saw that Hopkins's masterpiece had been accepted. Smiling out from the center of the left-hand page, one hand extended in greeting, was the jaunty figure of "Speedy" Lamb. Under the photograph was the caption: "'Speedy' the Spender. This frisky Freshman is just a regular fellow who is leaving a trail of empty ice cream cones in his wake."

Here was the official recognition of his fame and popularity! To be photographed for the "Tattler" after only three weeks in college! The paper sacred to Chester Trask resting upon the famous sundial. He hurried back upstairs with the precious paper and sat down upon his bed to study the evidence of his renown with more meticulous care. He secured scissors and slit out the cocky figure of "'Speedy' the Spender" and the explanatory caption. Walking over to the wall near his dresser, he thoughtfully regarded the clipping of Chester Trask in football uniform that he had pinned there. Every day he had been accustomed to gaze at the great Trask and

wonder whether he would ever be able to attain a lustrous reputation like that of the college hero.

With the impressiveness of a General Pershing remarking, "Lafayette, we are here," Harold pinned his own photograph underneath that of Chester Trask.

Throughout the day Harold accepted the grins that accompanied mention of the "Tattler" photograph as a tribute. He took good-naturedly, albeit a little sheepishly, Professor Stoddard's remark, following the Freshman's failure to translate an easy paragraph in French, that " 'Speedy' the Spender didn't seem to spend much time on his French." Even the faculty had taken cognizance of his initiation into pictorial prominence. Lamb had visions now of the photograph being copied in the rotogravure sections of the New York papers, along with such shots as "Tate football warriors in strenuous workout" and "Tate boasts of fattest and thinnest Freshmen in America."

That afternoon he bought extra copies of the "Tattler" at McMasters' University News Stand, marked them and despatched them proudly to his parents, Peter Thatcher and Professor Harlow Gaines. Having mailed the papers, he dropped in at the Hotel Tate and sauntered up to Peggy's counter.

"Did you see my picture in the 'Tattler' to-day, Peggy?" he asked proudly at once.

Peggy nodded affirmatively. She cast a thoughtful glance at him as if surprised that he should be so exuberant over breaking into print in such a way. As a matter of fact, she had herself clipped his picture out of a copy of the "Tattler." Even now it rested in her vanity case. But she had carefully cut the joshing caption from the picture and thrown it into the waste basket. She knew how the campus must be laughing at Harold's ridiculous, though quite characteristic, pose in the "Tattler" picture and the derisive lettering under it.

As if to confirm her belief, a group of students, accompanied by several town girls with whom they had been motoring, breezed into the Tate and up to the counter. Many of them were carrying "Tattlers" and waved them at Harold.

"Here's the kid himself now!" shouted the voice of Dan Sheldon.

Peggy bit her lips and frowned. But Harold, delighted at the crowd gathering around him, faced them smiling.

However, he remained the center of attraction for only a moment. In the next instant a powerful automobile roared up to the curb outside. The crowd around the Fresh-

man turned. Somebody shouted, "It's Chet Trask!" Instantly Harold's audience piled out of the hotel entrance, leaving him alone.

Dan Sheldon, the last to leave, paused to grin and tell his protégé, "You see, you can never be as popular as Chet Trask unless you play on the football team." And Dan, catching up with his pal, Garrity, winked broadly at the pudgy Sophomore.

Football! Golly, Harold thought, he hadn't gone out for the football team yet! In the rush of things he had neglected it.

"I'll go out for football then!" he cried to nobody in particular and brought his fist down upon the balustrade of the stairs near Peggy's counter. His fist struck something soft. Harold looked, nervous, and saw he had crushed a hat resting on the balustrade. It belonged to the tall, dignified-looking man standing there talking to another gentleman. Dean Pennypacker! Harold was horrified. But the dean relieved the frightened Freshman's mind by putting on his hat without noticing its battered condition and walking out of the hotel.

Harold lingered around the lobby of the hotel a little longer and had the pleasure of escorting Peggy home.

"I mailed copies of the 'Tattler' with my picture in it to my folks," he told her proudly.

"Oh, do you think that's wise?" she protested impetuously.

"Why not?" he asked her at once. "They'll be tickled to death. Particularly my Uncle Peter, who helped me come to college. He's a prominent man himself and will appreciate what this means."

Peggy had an intuitive horror of what Uncle Peter would think. She attempted another tack.

"Harold, I asked Professor Stoddard about you. He boarded with us last year and left to take a house in Tate Manor when he got married," she went on gravely. "He said you weren't doing so well in your French. He said you were bright enough, but you apparently didn't take time to study."

"Oh, that's all right," Harold said airily, pleased at Peggy's interest in him. "We had harder French than he teaches in our high school. I've been pretty busy lately. Not much time to study."

"But you mustn't neglect your work," Peggy protested. "An awful lot of Freshmen flunk out in the Spring every year. You wouldn't want that to happen. And what about football? I thought you told me you were going out for the team."

He turned toward her with a start. His mouth half opened in chagrin. "Say," he

ejaculated, "I clean forgot about football till this afternoon. You bet I want to try for the team. I told Chester Trask in Cleveland last Spring that that was one of the principal reasons I wanted to come here. Do you suppose it's too late now?"

Peggy considered. "They've been practicing two weeks now. But it's never too late for a good man."

"I'll report to-morrow afternoon," Harold promised.

"I certainly hope you will," Peggy replied rather primly, implying that her favor somehow hinged upon his keeping this promise. "You'll get a lot more satisfaction out of trying to play football and doing well at your studies than you will running around with cheap sports like Dan Sheldon and 'Pudge' Garrity."

Harold's feelings were a little ruffled. "Why, they're fine fellows," he maintained. "They've shown me a lot of the ropes around here."

"Look out that they don't hang you with one of them," Peggy said tartly and regretted it immediately afterward, catching a glimpse of his hurt face. But she left him without attempting to ease the force of her remark.

After having dinner at Freshman Commons, Harold walked slowly down University Street

alone. He was somewhat stunned. Peggy seemed to be impatient, angry at him. Why? Just when he was expecting to be praised. A vague feeling of resentment against her began forming. But he had little chance to think it over further, for in the next minute another and rather harsher feminine voice addressed him.

He looked up to discover the rather tall, sparse figure of Grace Beach standing in front of him. "Harold Lamb of all people," she said. "I called you up this afternoon. I am having a little party at my house this evening after the movies. Just an informal little affair in honor of my cousin, Delphine Smythe. You met her at Lakeport. Just a few friends. Drop around after the movies. We'll sing and dance and have a little lemonade and cake. Ever since our ride home together the other night I've thought I'd like to repay you for your kindness in giving Delphine and me a lift home."

Miss Beach strove to look coy. Harold did not fancy her, especially compared with the freshness and youth of Peggy. But he was a little sore at Peggy.

He managed to stammer, "Why, yes, I'd be pleased to come."

"That's wonderful," she said. "Perhaps you'll find Mr. Sheldon and Mr. Garrity in

the movies and come down to Dinsmore Road afterward with them."

Harold had not as yet visited that famous institution, the "Tate Students' Motion Picture Palace. Gus Stover, Proprietor," though in this respect he was most unique. For it was the habit of the Tate student body to gather at the cinema every evening in the hour after dinner and before repairing to their rooms to study or for further diversion. Having committed himself to Grace Beach's party, Harold resolved to chuck work completely for that evening and seek Sheldon and Garrity at the movies. He walked down University Street and joined the mob that was crowding into the gayly lithographed entrance to Mr. Stover's highly lucrative emporium.

"Blind Pete," the peanut man, was standing as usual just to the left of the box office. Pete was a Tate institution, and every student dropped a dime in the blind man's tin cup and took out a bag of peanuts as a matter of course before he stepped up to the box-office window. That's why the floor crackled under Harold's feet as he filed into the theater and hunted for a vacant seat. There was a coating of peanut shells underneath.

The interior of the temple of cinema art

was about on a par with Horowitz's Palace, in Sanford. The walls were an unesthetic canary yellow. There was no balcony. The hard, bare seats were double-riveted to the floor. Gus Stover didn't believe in taking chances.

The audience was friendly but boisterous. Chums greeted each other loudly across the intervening aisles. There was good-natured "razzing." A lanky Senior, desiring to join a fraternity brother two rows north, did so over the backs of the seats. The place was jammed with a gathering that was totally male. Ladies were not tolerated at Stover's. That was a tradition.

"Yoa, 'Speedy'!" shouted a voice. "Come on over here. Saving a seat for you." It was Dan Sheldon. Harold stumbled over ten assorted feet and tumbled into the seat beside his Sophomore friend.

"Going down to the widow's?" Sheldon asked curiously.

"Do you mean Miss Beach?" Harold asked innocently. "I didn't know she'd ever been married."

"She hasn't, innocent one. But the boys all call her 'the college widow.' Lord knows she'd have gotten married long ago if she could. It isn't from lack of trying. Watch

your step around that bimbo, 'Speedy,' old kid." Sheldon winked elaborately at the youth beside him.

The angular young lady who played the piano arrived and the lights were snapped off. The tumult and the shouting died down a bit as the opening titles of a slapstick comedy were flashed upon the screen. The audience did not consider this custard-pie tidbit funny and promptly yelled "Rotten!" at the top of its collective lungs and continued to yell until the reel was over. In the intermission between the news reel and the feature picture, somebody shouted, "Parsons! 'Cy' Parsons. Music!" Others took up the cry. "Cy" Parsons was paged from all over the room. Finally he obliged. The tall slouching form of the Senior who had sold Harold the lion picture was pushed out into the main aisle and made its way down to the piano. The young lady on the piano bench deserted her post and took a seat in the front row. Parsons cramped his long legs under the keyboard.

In a few minutes "Cy" demonstrated why he had been summoned. He was a wizard on the keys. Not only an adept, but a humorist as well. He improvised music cues for the rather silly feature picture, playing "Shall We Gather at the River?" as the distraught heroine was threatening to drown

herself and "How Dry I Am" when the extras on the screen were guzzling champagne in the orgy scene. Then he swung into a medley of Tate airs and the audience sang at the top of its lungs.

The audience did more than this. It seemed to be packed with mimics and ventriloquists. When a whistle blew on the screen, there came the shrill shriek of a factory siren from the darkness near Harold. Moving trains, chattering old women, rubes, guns shooting, horses galloping—all these were imitated by various geniuses in the packed house synonymously with their appearance on the silver sheet. They read the subtitles aloud in unison. They shouted "Look out!" at the top of their lungs as the villain was sneaking up upon the hero. And as the light flashed up at the end of the program, they rendered their unanimous verdict —"Rotten!" If they had happened to approve of the picture, they would have yelled the same thing.

Harold was thrilled. He resolved to come to the movies every night. He feared that Grace Beach's party would be an anti-climax after this. And it was.

If only "Cy" Parsons and his educated fingers could have been persuaded to come! Dan Sheldon, however, did not think much

of Parsons. In reply to Harold's query, he described the musical picture-salesman as "a queer bird, poor as a church mouse, with no friends."

Dinsmore Road was only five minutes from Stover's. Grace Beach greeted the trio effusively at the door. Two other Sophomores had already arrived. The party, to Harold's mind, was a frost from the start. Mr. and Mrs. Beach remained in the living room for the first half hour or so. The angular Mr. Beach hovered over his radio and produced weird noises from it. Mrs. Beach rocked and knitted and monopolized the conversation, to the annoyance of the two younger women. How different from his own mother this fat, raspy-voiced old lady was, Harold thought.

With a great display of mechanical ingenuity Papa Beach wound the clock on the mantelpiece at ten o'clock and the two older people retired from the scene. The two girls and the students then clustered around the piano and Grace played Tate songs with a heavy touch. The rest attempted to sing, and did so very badly.

Another half hour dragged by. Sheldon turned the radio onto a jazz band number from a New York roof garden. Dan took Grace as his partner. Pudgy little Garrity placed his fat arm around Delphine. The

other two Sophomores and Harold exchanged glances. All three were of the same mind. With a stealthy tread they approached the open front door and, seizing the opportunity when the four dancers had gyrated into the dining room, ducked out and down the steps into Dinsmore Road.

"What a washout," grumbled one Sophomore when they were safely down the street.

"We earned our lemonade and cake, but I'm glad I didn't have to stay for it," said the other.

Reaching his room, Harold was thinking how different Peggy Sayre was from Grace Beach and her cousin. With Peggy on his mind, he sat down at his desk, picked up his French book and tried manfully to translate the five poems of Alfred de Musset assigned the class for the morrow. In ten minutes his head had dropped into his arm, outstretched on the desk, and he was asleep.

CHAPTER X

IT was Dan Sheldon's picturesque description of Mike Cavendish, coach of the Tate University football team, that Mike was so tough that he shaved with a blow torch. But this was a trifle exaggerated, the distortion being possibly due to Sheldon's sad experience with the Tate football mentor back in the fall of Freshman year.

Dan was for one short week a candidate for the 1928 gridiron team. The Freshman eleven was not coached directly by the redoubtable Cavendish. "Curly" Evans, only a few years out of Tate himself and a much milder man than Mike, was the overseer of the yearling squad. "Curly" was scrimmaging his first and second teams that fatal Autumn late afternoon when Cavendish, who was head of all Tate football and hence "Curly's" boss, wandered over from the varsity field. Dan Sheldon, with little hope of making the team, was playing an indifferent game at end on the second Freshman team.

The first team quarterback barked a signal. The ball was passed. The opposing forwards charged. The halfback with the ball shot into the line off tackle, bumped into a stone

wall and, tackled sharply, dropped the ball. The loose spheroid oozed out from the wildly groping fingers and rolled lazily out upon the cinder running track bordering the football field. Dan Sheldon, never one to rush madly into rough mêlées, was free and not four feet from the ball. But the cinders of the track looked very sharp and menacing. Dan ran over and gingerly attempted to pick the ball up with his fingers. He missed, tried again, missed again. Then a heavy body came hurtling through the air. Mershon, center on the first Freshman team, had thrown his two hundred and ten pounds upon the ball, cinders notwithstanding, and had folded it lovingly to his capacious abdomen.

Hardly had Sheldon recovered from the shock of being knocked galley-west by Mershon when a more deadly menace descended upon him.

"What's the matter with you, Percy, eh?" came a deep, bulldoggy voice at his head. "Afraid to soil your lily white fingers, eh?"

Dan looked up into the red, unshaven, angry face of Mike Cavendish. Mastodonic in size, shaggy as a bear, Mike looked as if he was undecided whether to eat Dan whole or tear him apart with his clawlike fingers.

Dan stammered, "But—the ball was on the cinders. I—I thought I had time to pick it

up and make some distance with it instead of falling on it." Then he made the mistake of adding, "It's only practice anyway."

"Practice, hey!" roared Cavendish. He turned and bellowed in another direction, "Evans! Evans!" And when the frail-looking Freshman coach came trotting up, "What kind of milksops are you nursing over here, eh! Give this baby his bottle and tell him to run home! Chase him off the field and shoot him if he comes back. Lettin' a fumble go because he didn't want to get the naughty cinders in his finger nails! What kind of tea drinkers are we gettin' here for football material anyway!"

Sheldon attempted a look of injured innocence, but it wouldn't come off. He was too scared Cavendish would bite him. So he turned obediently and trotted off the field. Later in Commons he told his dinner mates all the biting retorts he might have made to Cavendish, "the big bum," but for some reason hadn't.

Such was hard-boiled Mike Cavendish, head coach of the Tate University football teams. Tate had secured his services from a college in the Northwest, where he had won a nation-wide reputation by turning out football teams that had not suffered defeat for five years running. When Tate started its

drive, with the inauguration of Dean Pennypacker, for a bigger and better college, it was recognized that one of the essentials was a consistently winning football team. No college can have a better advertisement than that, it was urged. Besides, did not Tate now have the largest athletic stadium in America? And could one expect to fill this concrete and marble amphitheater with sport-loving American spectators at three dollars per spectator if one could not produce A-1 football teams?

In the emergency, influential alumni insisted that the present coach, who had been producing indifferent teams, be fired and the the services of the famous Mike Cavendish be secured at any cost. Did not Union State, Tate's ancient rival, have a coach who contributed signed articles to a newspaper syndicate and had written a book on football? Could Tate do less? Obviously not. Without inquiring into the personality of the one and only Cavendish, the alumni athletic committee signed a five-year contract with him and he had come to Tate two years previously.

If Cavendish was a roughneck in appearance, he was even more so in action on the football field. Himself the product of a wild and woolly western university, he was accustomed to molding football teams out of brawny lumberjacks, thick-hided farmers'

boys, stolid Scandinavians and other varieties of citizens who would be insulted if one were polite to them.

If Mike's tactics with his men brought protests from the more conservative Tatians, they also brought results on the field. Tate, with only fair material, had beaten Union State both years of the Cavendish régime. And while the unsuccessful candidates for Cavendish's team hated him cordially and called him a man-killer, the survivors worshiped the man like a god. A giant of hasty and gusty decisions, of vitriolic tongue and piercing eye, Cavendish knew football and human nature. He frequently worked his men until they collectively dropped in their tracks, but on the snappy November afternoon when Tate lined up against Union State he had thus far been able to trot out a splendidly conditioned, excellently coached machine that had bored through the rival university to glorious victory.

On the afternoon following Harold Lamb's fateful promise to Peggy to go out for football, Mike Cavendish was in a tantrum.

That Tate varsity football squad one and all had incurred their coach's deep displeasure. They could not tackle. With the opening game of the season only a few days away, they could not tackle. They grabbed around

the neck. They hit below the shoe-strings. They struck the runners so lightly that the runners shook them off and ran right along. Only once in a while could Mike find a tackle that warmed his heart; a good old Cavendish sledgehammer tackle that swooped a man off his feet as if he had been cut down by a gigantic scythe and smashed him to earth as if he had fallen from the Woolworth Tower.

Mike watched the first and second varsity teams scrimmaging. His wrath was rising. It boiled over. He rushed in between the two rows of linemen and scooped up the ball. "Come over here, you bunch of butter fingers!" he yelled at his squad. They formed a half-circle around him, sheepish and with lowered heads. They knew the tackling had been rotten. They realized they were in for some Cavendish acid.

He started off very low and deliberate, "I didn't really think we were running a little petting party out here. I didn't really think it. The way you fellows toddle up to each other and gently hand out little slaps on the wrist and little love taps on the hips. It's pretty. It sure is. You ought, all of you, to be pouring tea somewhere this afternoon instead of getting your complexions all ruined out here in the open air." Suddenly he thrust out his jaw. He ran his sharp eyes all around

the uneasy half-moon of men. His voice barked out like a Gatling gun. "You dubs are dead from the dandruff down! What this team needs is the fighting spirit! I've a good mind to fire every one of you off this field and use the whole Freshman team against Carver on Saturday. I told Captain Trask here that, and he said, 'Give 'em one more chance.' So listen. I'm a soft-hearted fool, but I'll give it to you. We'll stop the scrimmaging. We'll work out on the tackling dummy from now till every man on the squad has made five perfect tackles, whether we quit at six o'clock or at midnight! Understand?" And he turned and started yelling loudly for "Mulligan! Mulligan! Where's Mulligan?"

A squatty little Irishman with a ragged sweater on his chest and a dirty baseball cap on his head came trotting up.

"Mulligan, get out the tackling dummy and rig it," Cavendish snorted.

Mulligan looked uneasy. He passed the back of his hand over his peanut of a nose and sniffled. Mulligan was in charge of the equipment around the varsity practice field. He said in a very small voice, "Mr. Cavendish, sor, the tacklin' dummy was busted Tuesday, if you will remember, and it ain't been fixed."

"What!" roared Coach Cavendish and he

made a gesture as if to tear his red hair. "What kind of a place is this? Hasn't anybody got any interest, any spirit!" The coach turned and pointed to Chester Trask, standing near him, and shouted, "Here's the only man on the whole field with the real Tate spirit!"

At that moment the football captain heard a banging noise in the direction of the near-by entrance gate to Tate Field and went over to ascertain the trouble. Before he could reach the gate, it was opened and a new and amazing football player stepped in.

Meantime, Cavendish was raving on. He waved his hand toward the spot where Chester Trask had stood and shouted, "There's the man to model yourselves after. He's worth more than the rest of you put together! He's a regular go-getter—a red-blooded fighter—the kind of a man that Tate is proud of."

Cavendish was pointing his finger violently at the supposed Trask. But Trask was there no longer. In his place was standing the new player who had just come in at the gate. And the new player was Harold Lamb!

Harold wore his Sanford High School uniform, complete with shin guards, headgear, nose guard and his inevitable tortoise-shelled glasses. They were probably the only pair

of shin guards extant on a college gridiron that Fall. His shoulders were padded until he looked like a hunch-back. His trousers were ballooned with padding. Coach Harlow Gaines, of the Sanford High School eleven, who considered football a brutal game and coached it only because his contract demanded it, had insisted upon this safety-first uniform.

Coach Cavendish, still ignorant that the captain and the Freshman had exchanged places, went shouting on. "You're all afraid of getting hurt! I'd like some one to show me a real rough tackle!" he pleaded.

And his wish was gratified! For at that moment, Hughie Mulligan, smarting and sore from his bawling-out, saw that a player was standing on one of the team's blankets and jerked it out suddenly from under the offending man's feet. The man was Harold! The Freshman lost his balance, fell, clutched out for support and caught the legs of Mike Cavendish. Coach and novice went plunging to the ground together.

Then Mike noticed what his almost convulsed squad had been trying to signal him silently for the past five minutes. He noticed the strange apparition of Harold "Speedy" Lamb. He glared. He roared. He might have done bodily injury to the smiling Harold if Chester Trask had not interfered.

When Harold and Cavendish were again on their feet, the Freshman approached the coach jauntily, did his Lester Laurel jig.

"I'd like to play on your football team," chirped the Freshman, "if you don't mind."

Cavendish stared at him in amazement. Then he elected to handle the situation with his well-known gift for sarcasm.

"Can you kick a football?" Cavendish asked.

When Harold nodded, the coach handed him a ball.

Cavendish turned to the squad gathered around for the fun. "Run down the field a ways and receive this young man's kick, Crawford."

A lithe youth loped down the field thirty or more yards. But Harold was not satisfied. He had done the punting for Sanford High School. He could punt. He motioned Crawford to go further back. Then, in his eagerness to give the ball a mighty boot, he nearly missed it entirely. His foot glanced off the pigskin. The ball flew up over his head and backwards over the fence clear out of the field!

Harold, blushing furiously, turned and fled out of the gate after the ball. He was gone so long that Cavendish, resuming his harangue to the squad, had almost forgotten the freak

newcomer's existence. But Harold came back on the field again, the rescued ball in his hand, and innocently sidled up close to the coach.

Cavendish, seeing the joke football player return, swept his squad with fiery eyes. "What is this?" he demanded. "Something you cake eaters framed up on me?"

The players, sobering up, denied this vigorously.

He roared at Harold, "You a Freshman?"

"Why, yes, I—"

"You got sent in here by some of these smart Sophomores, hey? What is it—a fraternity initiation or something? Tell me the names of the guys that sent you and I'll break their necks. This football team is terrible enough without any of this joke business."

Harold spoke up. "Nobody sent me, sir. I came of my own accord. I entered college principally to play football. I'm sorry I was late in reporting for the team. I've been so busy with other things I—"

"Well, get busy on 'em again then! Get off this field and, if you value your life, DON'T COME BACK!" And Cavendish, who thought now that things had gone far enough, thrust his unshaven jaw pugnaciously into Harold's face.

"Speedy" Lamb paled. He shifted from one foot to the other. He was utterly misera-

ble. He looked as if he might cry. He gulped and turned to walk away toward the gate that he had entered. His dream of being a second Chester Trask, of pleasing Peggy, was being shattered! He walked slowly and with head down.

At the gate the Freshman hesitated, half hopeful that somebody would call him back.

But there was no pity in the heart of Michael Joseph Cavendish. The coach continued to sputter after the retreating form. The Cavendish eyes shifted for a moment to that other object of his wrath, Hughie Mulligan, working feverishly on the tackling dummy. Between Hughie and "Speedy" and the team's terrible tackling, Mike's day was a total loss. In the instant that Harold was about to disappear through the gate and kiss the Tate football field good-by forever, a brilliant idea struck the brain of Cavendish. Why not? If this awful Freshman excuse for a football player had come, or been sent there as a joke, why not turn the joke the other way? If this freaky rookie was so set upon playing football, why not let him? What was his name?—Lamb?—was so heavily padded that he couldn't get hurt much.

"Hey, you!" Cavendish called after the chagrined form of Harold. "Hey, Freshman —come back here."

Harold turned eagerly, hardly believing his ears. He rushed back to the side of Cavendish. The rookie was beaming from ear to ear.

"Now then, the first thing I'm going to teach you is tackling," explained Prof Mike. "The best way to learn how to tackle is to be tackled. I'll have a few of the boys line up and tackle you gentle-like. Stand here, Lamb. Go ahead, Trask, and line the squad up. Over there, by Mulligan. Right here, Lamb. Hurry up, you ladies' men. Snap into it! All right?"

He walked over to the players, out of earshot of Harold. He ripped out at them, "Now come on and show me whether you can tackle or whether I've got to can the whole bunch of you. One at a time, hit this kid with all you've got. You can't kill 'em when they're as green as he is. Besides, he's all padded up like a mattress." He rushed back and stood by Harold. He soothed, "Don't worry, kid. You won't feel it no more than a feather. Come on now, you love-tappers! Come on, Crawford—you're first."

A lithe, sweatered figure shot out of the single file of varsity players, streaked over the space between them and Harold, left the earth five feet from Harold in a neat diving

parabola and struck the Freshman at the waist line with the force of a locomotive. Tackler and tackled hit the ground with a crash, with Crawford's head pillowed against Harold's side. The quarterback sprang to his feet. Harold pulled his shattered wits and bruised body together slowly and painfully in time to hear Cavendish roar, "Rotten, Crawford! Too high. Much too high. A good man could shake that tackle off as if you'd just slapped him on the back. Hit him here—here!" And Mike hit the back of Harold's legs a smart crack with his arms and Harold almost pitched to the ground again.

"Come on, Mershon—your turn," yelled the insatiable Cavendish.

The varsity center repeated Crawford's performance. Only this time the tackle weighed over two hundred pounds instead of a mere hundred and fifty.

"Not around the shoe strings!" boomed Cavendish.

Then Harold's ears began to sing, his head was half groggy, his body racked and twisted. The air seemed full of human bodies, all catapulting at him. Crash! Tough young flying flesh hit him. Bang! He hit the ground. And each time more laboriously he raised himself to his feet, while Cavendish's husky, complaining accents punctuated the din:

"Never tackle a man that way. You might get hurt."

"Harder, Blythe! Don't kiss him—tackle him!"

"Jar him up. Make believe he's got the ball and make him fumble it!"

"That's better, Childers. Help the Freshman up, Mulligan."

After what seemed to be hours, Harold, through the haze, discerned a familiar face headed his way. Fast as the face was coming, he saw it was Chester Trask. Like an arrow speeding to its mark Trask ran, leaped, locked steel arms around Harold's knees, whirled him cleanly off his feet and, with a peculiar sidewise wrench, spun him around in a semicircle. Harold felt that every ligament in his body had been suddenly jerked out of place. This was Trask's famous corkscrew tackle, as might be testified by many an opponent of Tate who had fumbled a ball when hit by Trask.

"That," enthused Cavendish at last, "is the way to tackle!"

But Trask did not hear the compliment. He was looking down anxiously at the battered body of Harold. The Captain stooped swiftly and helped the human tackling dummy to his uncertain feet.

"Hurt?" he asked.

Through bloody cut lips, Harold insisted breathlessly, "No—I—feel—fine."

"Good boy," smiled Trask with relief, and patted the dislocated pad on Harold's right shoulder.

"That was—a—dandy—tackle," Harold stammered.

"Thanks," said Trask.

The captain walked over to Coach Cavendish and engaged him in a whispered conversation, nodding over toward Harold a couple of times. Mike for a time disagreed. But finally he shrugged his shoulders, as if to say that it was Trask's funeral after all.

Cavendish turned toward the players. "That's all for to-day," he growled. "Report to-morrow as usual at two." He blew his whistle. Then he turned to Harold. A grudging smile of admiration for the Freshman's grit flickered across Mike's rugged face for an instant.

The coach bent over to pick up the damaged tackling dummy and carry it into the field house. But worn out as Harold was, the Freshman was still alert enough to realize that a mighty man like Mike Cavendish shouldn't be forced to perform menial tasks like toting tackling dummies. Harold reached down as quickly as his aching back permitted and took the piece of apparatus

under his arm before the coach could reach it. Cavendish, after a stare at the zealous candidate, shrugged his shoulders and walked over toward the field house. There he engaged in conversation with Captain Chester Trask.

Harold, his tired body struggling under the weight of the tackling dummy and a pair of empty water pails, passed by the two mighty ones.

With an effort he straightened his faltering body. He forced a smile into his scratched and bruised face. Looking up into Mike Cavendish's face, Harold said cheerfully through bloody lips to the coach, "We had a dandy workout, didn't we, Coach?"

That was why, a few moments later, Cavendish remarked to Captain Chester Trask, "That kid's got a great spirit. I hate to tell him he can't make the team."

Trask, who had been thinking of the same thing and had arrived at a conclusion, replied, "Why not keep him on the squad as a water boy or something—and let him think he's one of the substitutes?"

"A good idea," Cavendish replied.

"All right," said Trask. "I'll warn the other boys not to disillusion the kid. It won't do any harm."

Trask walked over to where the weary

Harold waited and said as matter-of-factly as possible, "Report here with the others tomorrow at two o'clock."

Harold's battered face was suddenly wreathed in smiles.

"Then—I've made the team!" cried the overjoyed Freshman almost in a voice of awe.

Chester Trask nodded. He didn't have the heart to tell him different.

CHAPTER XI

If Harold had an impulse to dance for joy at Trask's unexpected good news, his battered body soon made him acquainted with the impossibility of such unconventional behavior. He ached in a hundred places. Already his bruises were stiffening so that he could hardly walk. But walk he must. For, following the informal procedure of his old Sanford High School football days, Harold had donned his togs in his room and walked to Tate Field. This to the snickering delectation of the gentlemanly loafers on University Street.

He stood on the sidewalk outside the gate of the football field and wondered miserably how he was going to summon up the strength to traverse the six or seven blocks to Clark Street. His spirits were high, but his flesh was very, very low. In this emergency a taxicab rattled to the curb. The *deus ex machina* behind the steering wheel was a white man as tattered as his vehicle. This equipage now came to an asthmatic stop in front of Harold.

"Taxi, boss?" inquired the chauffeur. "Sure looks like you need one, boss."

Harold hesitated. The taxi might be expensive. He ought to walk to save money. But he simply couldn't. He felt incapable of traveling a block. He laboriously pulled himself into the tonneau of the machine and said, "Fifteen Clark Street."

Immediately the taxi man seemed called upon to give a demonstration to prove that his taxicab wasn't as dead as it looked. He bounced down University Street at an amazing speed. At the corner of Clark he turned so sharply that Harold was flung off the seat and, every hurt spot on his body screaming for mercy, down to the floor of the machine. The Freshman made a half-hearted attempt or two to rise from his undignified position during the last hundred yards of his journey. But it was no use. When the driver, having stopped the car with sickening suddenness, leaped from the seat and opened the rear door, he discovered his passenger huddled helplessly on the floor. The chauffeur sniffed. For an instant he suspected something anti-Volsteadian. Then he concluded otherwise.

Harold finally pulled himself together and, assisted by the chauffeur, reached the sidewalk. He reached into his sweater for his wallet and paid off the taxi man, who drove away.

As the Freshman stood for a moment gird-

ing up his strength to mount the Sayre porch, a fat hand suddenly struck him a resounding blow in the back.

"Hello, Speedy, how's the boy!" came the loud voice of Sheldon's friend, Garrity, who was escorting a Clark Street girl to her home.

Harold's headguard, which he had been holding in his hand, fell to the sidewalk. He tried to do his Lester Laurel jig to greet Garrity, but he could hardly manage it. The Sophomore passed on down the street curious and grinning.

"Speedy" bent to the task of picking up his headguard from the sidewalk. In the front yard next door Mr. Hodge, the Tate butcher, was engaged in propping up his flowers with sticks. He bent a stick over his knee to make it the same length as the others. A sharp crack sounded in the crisp autumn air. Harold suddenly turned pale and clutched at his bent back. For an instant he thought it had broken! Then he straightened, realizing the absurdity of his fears.

Out on University Street the Tate General Hospital ambulance went clanging by at a furious pace. Harold threw up his hand as if to hail it! But, disregarding him, it went rushing on. Harold turned wearily toward the Sayre front porch.

He made the steps up to the porch all right.

He opened the front door and toiled up the first flight of steps. The second flight loomed like Mount Everest. But he set to work on it, dragging his feet wearily one after the other. So, finally, he attained the very last step. And there he had to stop and rest before negotiating the remaining twenty feet of hallway to his room. He sat there leaning against the wall, smiling. Chester Trask had personally told him to report for football at two o'clock the next afternoon!

And there Peggy, coming home from work, found him.

It was a very flushed and excited Peggy that mounted the steps. She was going to tell Harold Lamb something for his own good, disillusion him!

For that very afternoon, not ten minutes previous, Dan Sheldon had brought an excruciatingly funny news to the group of college loafers loitering around her counter in the Hotel Tate.

"I've got a new one on 'Speedy,'" Dan offered jocosely. "He thinks he made the football team, and he's only the water boy."

Some member of the squad, disregarding Trask's orders, had communicated this choice morsel to Dan.

The laughter resulting from Dan's sally made Peggy, behind the counter, boil. Fi-

nally she could stand it no longer. She rushed out and confronted Dan.

"Harold Lamb has more spunk in his little finger than you have in your whole conceited make-up!" she cried.

Then, so upset was she that she sought the hotel manager and announced that she was quitting for the day. She would hurry home, find Harold and tell him what had happened. Tell him the truth and let him fight it out.

Even now, coming upon him sprawled at the head of the stairs, tired and manhandled, Peggy was so full of her recent resolution that she started, "Harold, I've something to tell you—"

But he interrupted her. He turned enraptured eyes to hers and murmured ecstatically, "I made the team!"

Her face fell. She shrugged her pretty shoulders helplessly. She couldn't tell him now. It would be too cruel.

She concealed her real feelings and said simply, "I—I congratulate you."

She took notice of his weakened condition and asked anxiously, "What's the matter, Harold? Are you ill?"

He tried to assure her blithely. "Ill? No, I'm not ill. I've just been out for football, that's all. And I made good, Peggy. Chester Trask himself ordered me to report at two

o'clock to-morrow afternoon. He said I'd made the team. Isn't that wonderful?"

"Great," she agreed. But then, all concern, "Your face is cut and your right eye is black. And your sweater is torn. What have they been doing to you? Oh, that awful Cavendish man. He's a terror, they say."

"Don't say anything about Coach Cavendish, Peggy. He's a peach. A little strenuous maybe, but he gets results. We varsity fellows swear by him."

Peggy looked at him and tried to smile. He was such an innocent, such a good-hearted, sincere baby. She put an arm around his shoulders. "You can't sit here, Harold," she gently chided him. "You'll have to get up. I'll help you."

"Oh, I can get up all right," he protested. "I was just resting here for a minute and thinking. I'm all right."

But he accepted the aid of her arm. Perhaps it didn't really assist very much, but it felt fine. Thus he progressed down the hall to his room. Peggy opened the door for him.

She stood on the threshold a minute and ordered him maternally, "Now you take a good hot bath, Harold. And hurry over to Commons and get your dinner, or you'll be too late."

He promised. And he ventured, "And

later—Peggy. You're not working to-night, are you? Can't I come down after I come back from Commons and talk to you—about football? I don't have to study. I've got my work done for to-morrow."

"Well," she hesitated demurely, "I'll be in the living room at eight. If you would like to talk—"

And she disappeared.

Harold entered his room, nearly all in but very happy. Over to the wall he limped to the place where the "Tattler" photograph of himself hung under that of Chester Trask. Harold pulled out the thumb-tack holding his picture. For a second he looked at his own smiling photograph. Then he tacked it firmly in a new place—beside the picture of Captain Trask!

And so in "Speedy's" fancy, Chet Trask was tottering on his throne.

After a bath and a refreshing meal at Commons, Harold returned to find that Peggy had kept her promise. She was at the piano in the Sayre living room.

Never had he had such an excellent opportunity to get acquainted with pretty Peggy and he made full use of his chances. He told her all about Sanford, his Uncle Peter, his parents and Professor Harlow Gaines. She

was a very good listener. And then he started on football.

"You must come down and see me practice, Peggy," he told her earnestly. "I guess the practice is open to the public, except the two weeks before the Union State game. Then it's secret. Not even Dean Pennypacker can get in. Will you come?"

"Oh, I used to go to football practice every other afternoon or so last Fall," she replied rather airily. His unintentionally patronizing manner, she decided, needed reproof. "I knew lots of boys on the team. This year I work every afternoon but Wednesdays, so I don't know whether I can make it or not."

"Come next Wednesday, will you, Peggy?" he asked eagerly. The shot about "lots of boys" had found its mark. He was quite humble. "Maybe I'll get a chance to introduce you to Chester Trask."

She laughed. "I met Chester four years ago when he was a Freshman like you. I went to the Fall Frolic with him his Sophomore year."

"Oh," said Harold, abashed. And in a smaller voice, "He's a fine fellow, isn't he?"

"One of the best," she answered promptly. "Compared with him, a man like Dan Sheldon is—well, I won't say it."

"Dan's all right too," Harold defended. "He's democratic."

"So is the thug that hits you over the head and takes the money out of your pocket," said Peggy sharply. "Only the thug's more frank in his methods."

But she would not discourse further on the subject of Sheldon. She did, however, promise to drop in at football practice the following Wednesday afternoon. Though, truth to tell, she did not look forward eagerly to the occasion. A glance at Harold's freakish-looking uniform had indicated that his previous experience with the game must have been of an elementary character. She would not enjoy the spectacle of Harold in the rôle of water boy, she knew.

At nine o'clock she suggested tactfully that he had better retire to his room.

"You'll have to study harder if you expect to play on the football team," she told him. "They cut you off the squad if you fall down in your work, you know."

"I'll study," he promised her. "Only I wish you wouldn't make me go."

She was firm, however, and he arose to depart. As he started to mount the stairs, she called up to him, "And, Harold—wear your street clothes to the football field to-morrow."

"But I've got my old Sanford uniform," he objected. "I—"

"You're not in Sanford any more," she replied impatiently. "Forget Sanford for a while. This is Tate. In Tate the football players dress at the field house. Remember that." And she skipped back into the living room before he could offer any more objections. Some day, she grimly told herself, she would have to take this dear innocent and really tell him some things.

Against his better judgment, Harold followed Peggy's advice and walked into Tate Field at quarter to two the next afternoon in his street clothes. He stood near the gate alone for ten minutes. Then the illustrious huskies of the Tate squad began to arrive. They had had their orders from Captain Trask about "Speedy" Lamb. They maintained grave faces and nodded to him as to an equal. After a time he summoned up his nerve and followed one of them into the field house. He found the players in various states of nudity, abandoning mufti for the football uniforms they pulled out of their lockers. He was watching them, wondering what his next move would be, when Chester Trask arrived.

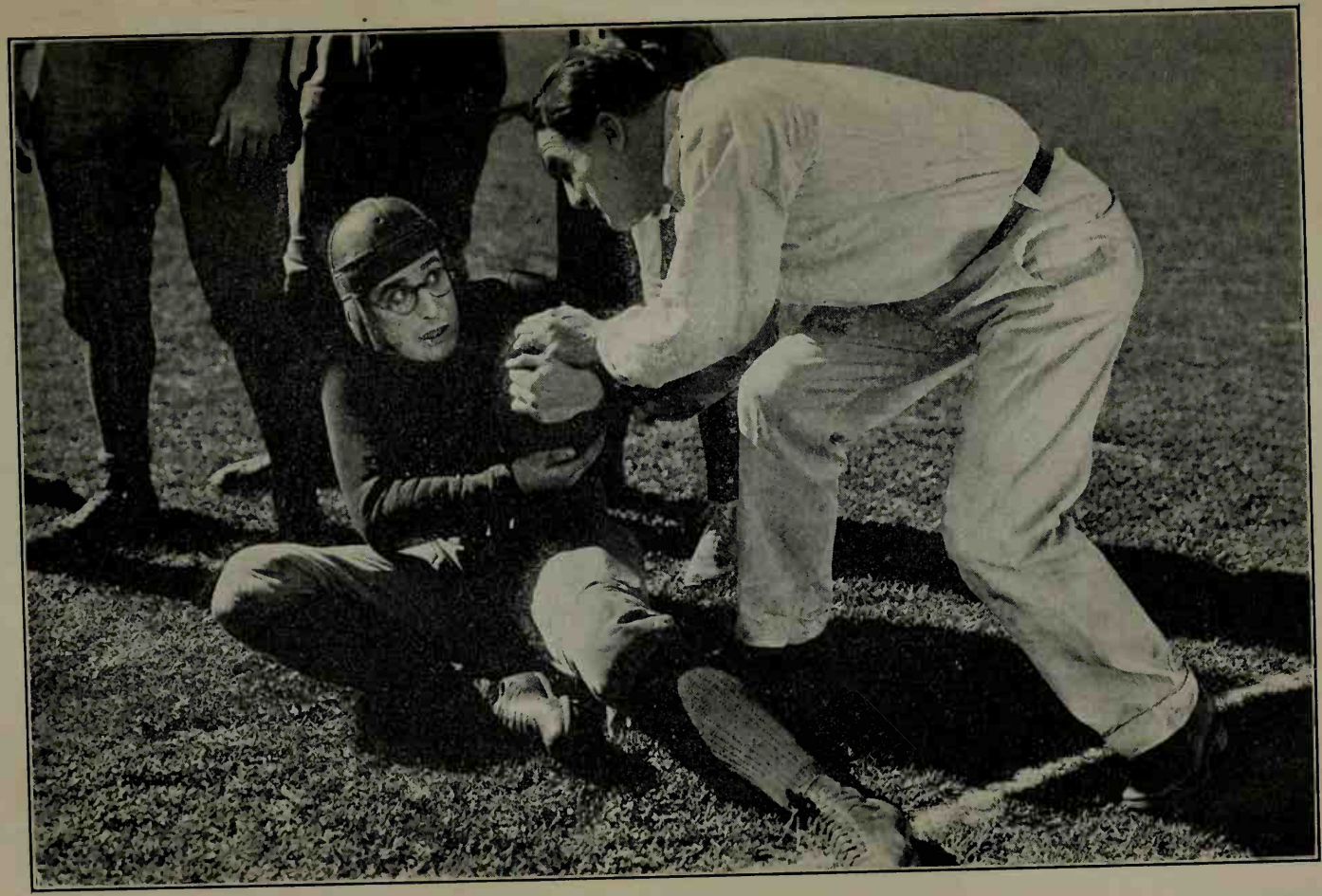
"Hello, Lamb," the captain greeted him soberly. "Waiting for a uniform? Mulligan

—hey, Mulligan!" And when Mike Cavendish's man-of-all-work waddled up, "Outfit Lamb here with one of those uniforms from last Thursday, will you?"

Mulligan shuffled away obediently. It had rained the previous Thursday and the varsity had practiced for four hours in the downpour and a sea of mud. Mulligan had been since then trying to dry out the uniforms. The players on the squad had experienced no inconvenience, being equipped with an extra suit apiece and the promise of a complete new outfit on the eve of the Union State game.

In a couple of minutes Mulligan came scuffing back with sweater, pants, socks and shoes. With a thrill Harold recognized the flaming red colors of Tate with the thin white stripes. The red was very much faded, to be sure, and it had run badly into the white. But still he was about to don the sacred colors of Tate. He was about to do or die for Good Old Tate on the gridiron. His gyrations before the mirror back in Sanford might not have been in vain after all.

The sweater and socks were musty and still damp. The trousers were stiff as a board in spots. The shoes were out of shape, caked with mud and unyielding as steel. Mulligan dumped the motley array of paraphernalia at the Freshman's feet and clanged open a



The Freshman.

A Harold Lloyd Corp. Production—A Pathé Picture.

"WHEN I BLOW THAT WHISTLE, GIVE ME THE BALL!"

locker for him. Harold divested himself briskly of his clothes and slipped on the messy gridiron attire, succeeding after a tough struggle in pinching his feet into the stiff shoes. The rest were already out on the field clustered around the brawny figure of Mike Cavendish as Harold emerged from the field house and sped to join them. The reclaimed uniform was too small for him.

Cavendish, paying no attention to his new Freshman recruit, set the squad to practicing on the tackling dummy, newly repaired by Mulligan.

"One tackle apiece," boomed Cavendish. "And, if you guys want to keep your jobs, make it a good one!"

The players formed in a long single line. Harold, without invitation, fell in at the end. One after the other, they ran, flung themselves at the woolen effigy of a football player hanging by its pulley, and brought it to earth. Cavendish observed them grimly. The tackling was much improved, though the coach's hard-boiled face did not admit it. When the last man ahead of Harold had made a perfect tackle, Cavendish walked over to Mulligan, who was standing by the dummy, and muttered something to him.

It was as the result of Mulligan's prompt obedience to the coach's order that Harold

encountered catastrophe. For Harold, impatient of an invitation, had decided to have a go at the tackling dummy. He set himself, launched out into as fast a sprint as his tight borrowed shoes would permit, hurled himself at the dangling dummy and hit—empty space and then the ground with a resounding whack. For Hughie Mulligan, with his back to Harold, had chosen that instant to pull the dummy up to the top of its crossbar preparatory to stowing it away for the day.

Harold gasped for a moment, the wind temporarily knocked out of him, striving to gather just what had gone wrong. He looked up from the sprawling posture into the glowering, unshaven face of Mike Cavendish. Mike snorted with disgust, but he didn't say a word. Instead the coach walked over to Chester Trask.

"Listen, Cap," he exploded to Chester in low, tense tones. "Get this right at the start! I kidded myself into giving this crazy Freshman, Lamb, leg room around this field. Now he's started goin' nutty again. Just threw himself at my feet and tried to knock me down! That guy may have the spirit, but he sure lacks the brains. Now, we may need some comedy relief around here, but I'm not goin' to have that nut gettin' under people's legs and gummin' the works. No, sir! It'll just

be a question whether he gets killed by himself or whether I kill him. I warn you, Cap. One more bat out of this Lamb lad and out he goes on his head. Either that or out I go—see?"

Trask laid a soothing arm on the coach's broad shoulder. "Calm down, Mike," he cajoled. "Don't worry about the kid. I'll take care of him. He won't annoy you."

The coach went away unconvinced and muttering. Trask saw Harold, who had just pulled himself to his feet.

"You want to do all you can for Tate, don't you, Freshman?" Trask asked him gravely.

"You bet!"

"Well, get this then: Don't do a thing out here on the football field till you get orders from me. Don't move. Go over there and sit on the bench now till I call you."

Harold went. He sat on the bench from half past two until six o'clock. Neither Trask nor Coach Cavendish had once looked his way. Other players sat on the bench, were called out to the scrimmage, pulled off sweaters and put them on again, returned to the bench panting to rest, doused mouths, faces and necks in the water bucket beside Harold's resting place. Once or twice he handed them the huge sponge when, eyes filled with water, they groped for it without success. But that

was the extent of his labors for Good Old Tate that afternoon.

The same sitting program was repeated every day the rest of that week. Harold began to grow uneasy, to smart under his inactivity. He had a suspicion that perhaps Chester Trask had forgotten the existence of Candidate Lamb. He wanted to trot out to the captain, tug at the great man's sweater and announce that he was ready for some real work. But orders were orders. Trask had looked so serious when he admonished Harold not to move a muscle unless he was told to. Harold was afraid to disobey.

As Monday afternoon of the week following began to be striped with the shadows of approaching dusk and still Harold's sole duty had consisted in resting on the bench and handing the sponge to exhausted warriors, he started to worry seriously about Wednesday. He did not want Peggy Sayre to sit in the grandstand and watch him hold down a sector of a hard wood bench all afternoon. He had been guilty of some pretty tall talk with Peggy as to his football activities. He would have to make good. But what was to be done about it?

It rained torrents on Tuesday. The deluge was so intense that Coach Cavendish reluctantly sent the assembled squad back to the

locker room, calling off practice for the day. He did so with considerable profane denunciation of the elements, for the Carver game was scheduled for Saturday and the team was slow in rounding into shape.

Wednesday, however, dawned clear as a bell. Peggy had said that she could not leave the cigar counter at the Tate until four o'clock but would come directly to the field. Yes, she would wait for Harold after practice and he could walk as far as the Commons with her. Harold put on his crusted uniform and, still without altered instructions from anybody or as much as a glance from Trask, uneasily took his place on the bench. He sat there for two hours, glancing ever and again at the grandstand. He almost hoped that Peggy had been detained, that she wouldn't appear.

Out on the field, Chester Trask, temporarily released from the scrimmage, was standing beside Coach Cavendish watching the first varsity eleven striving to rush the ball twenty yards through the scrub to a touchdown. His eye swept over the field and he suddenly became aware of Harold Lamb sitting disconsolately on the bench on the opposite side of the gridiron. Actually Trask for an instant wondered who the huddled bench-warmer was. He had completely forgotten about

"Speedy." Then he remembered. He felt a guilty pang. Why, he had let that kid sit there for nearly a week now.

At that moment Crawford, the varsity quarterback, faked a pass to Houghton, the right halfback, indulged in some rapid, typical Cavendish prestidigitation with the ball, foxed the opposing forwards and dashed around the end with the spheroid himself to a touchdown.

Cavendish and Trask followed the players to the goal line.

"O. K., Crawford," said Cavendish, which was as near as he ever came to complimenting anybody. "That's all the scrimmaging for to-day. Low, Blythe, Woolsey and Trask, practice drop kicking here. Start at ten yards and gradually work backwards. Candidates for center pass the balls to the kickers. The rest of you work on the tackling dummy. Get me? All right. Snap into it then!"

But Trask did not go directly to his drop-kicking. He hurried across the field to Harold, who looked up with a terrible eagerness as the captain approached.

"Come over and help receive these drop kicks," ordered Chester. Harold trotted after him, a great gladness in his heart. He did not stop to realize that he was setting out upon the most menial of tasks, a job comparable

with that of a caddy in a golf match. He only knew that Peggy, if she arrived now, would not see him warming the bench. He stationed himself back of the goal posts with four other Freshmen candidates. He celebrated his arrival by bumping into one of the other receivers, who was all set to handle the first ball, a beautiful spiral from the foot of Trask, and causing the poor chap to miss the catch. For this he was bawled out severely. But, in no wise disheartened, he bent to his labors with a will. He chased every ball kicked, though he now had grasped that he mustn't interfere with the other receivers. He went up into the grandstand after two or three wild kicks. He missed two catches. Then he snuggled a hard one to his chest, and rejoiced. He felt like giving three cheers as, casting a glance over toward the grandstand, he discovered that Peggy had selected that most propitious of all moments to sink into a seat in the third tier.

The rest of the afternoon was a complete success. After catching drop kicks for half an hour, Trask, now determined to make up for Harold's idleness by keeping him busy at any cost, set him to retrieving balls for the punters. The captain even stood by for a time and then offered a criticism of Harold's awkward manner of catching a football. The

Freshman absorbed these golden words of wisdom as if they had come from Mt. Sinai.

When the practice was called off for the day, he trotted proudly into the field house with the other players, head erect. He even ventured to join in their shouts and banter in the locker room and under the showers. He was one of them. His eyes were shining with something more than the water from the showers when he met Peggy outside the field and walked down University Street with her.

"Did you enjoy the practice?" he asked innocently, hoping secretly that she would make some comment upon his own fine showing.

"Very much," she replied. "The material looks very good. I guess Tate will have a good team this year. Billie Blythe and 'Cardinal' Woolsey and Chester Trask certainly made some fine drop kicks. I don't believe they come any better than those three."

"Some of their kicks were pretty hard to catch," he suggested.

"I know," she commented dryly. "They couldn't blame you for missing a couple. I don't see how you catch those spirals at all. They go so high and come down so fast."

"Just a matter of knack," he announced expertly.

Peggy sighed. He was incorrigible. She knew that there wasn't a shred of egotism in

his whole body. He was so innocently eager to impress her, to win her approval.

She decided to humor him. "I thought you did very nicely, Harold," she fibbed. "You've got the proper spirit. If you'll just listen to all that rough Cavendish man and Chester Trask tell you, you'll get along."

"You bet I will," he maintained staunchly. "And I'll listen to them, never fear. Chester Trask is a personal friend of mine, you know."

He turned as he heard himself hailed in a feminine voice from an automobile parked at the curb near the Hotel Tate.

"Hello, Mr. Lamb," shrilled the thin soprano of Grace Beach. And then, somewhat less cordially, "Good afternoon, Peggy."

Harold, who had not seen Grace since the boresome party after the movies and felt a little guilty over it, greeted her with overcordiality. Peggy, on the other hand, was rather cool. She knew the spinstery Miss Beach very well.

The other occupants of the car joined halfheartedly in Grace's salutations. On the front seat of Joe Bartlett's shiny automobile sat the simpering Grace beside Joe. In the tonneau lounged Grace's cousin Delphine and Leonard Trask. The latter two seemed rather absorbed in each other and hardly looked up to acknowledge Harold's presence. The blonde hair of Delphine was a little tousled.

She was giggling at the low-voiced remarks of Leonard. The quartet had been spending the early October afternoon riding in the country.

When Harold and Peggy had passed on, the Freshman remarked to his companion, "I didn't know you were acquainted with Grace Beach, Peggy."

She replied pertly, "Oh, everybody in Tate knows Grace."

"You don't like her then?"

"I never talk about other girls, Harold. This town is still too small to gossip in safety. Grace is all right. She just doesn't strike my fancy, that's all."

"Yes, she's all right—I guess," said Harold uncertainly. "I wonder what Chester Trask's kid brother sees in that Delphine though. She's an awful 'dumb dora.' "

Peggy smiled. Harold was picking up the Tate slang fast. She asked, for a reason Harold at the time did not fathom, "The Trasks have a lot of money, haven't they? Chester and Leonard are the sons of Trask, the big steel man, aren't they?"

"Yes," Harold replied. "But what—"

"Well, the Beaches and this Delphine haven't a dime," said Peggy shortly. And in a few minutes bid him good-by at the entrance to the Freshman Commons.

CHAPTER XII

BUT, after all, "Speedy" held down his familiar place on the bench throughout the opening game of the season with Carver College the following Saturday. He was glad that Peggy, who couldn't leave her post at the Hotel Tate, where football Saturdays were big days, was not in the grandstand to witness his inactivity. However, he had the pleasure of witnessing the game from a choice seat and to hear many of the inside phases of the contest from a Tate viewpoint. He was puzzled by the tactics of Coach Cavendish, who, as usual, held the entire first string Tate backfield out of the game the whole first quarter. All through this preliminary period the coach kept the four backs huddled around him as he commented upon the weaknesses of the Carver line and developed the strategy for the rest of the game. Then, as the whistle sounded for the second quarter, Cavendish slapped his best ball carriers on their respective broad backs and sent them into the fray. The famous "Big Four"—Crawford, Blythe, Houghton and Trask. And what a yell went up from the Tate stands as they reported to the referee and pranced into their places be-

hind Mershon, the big center! Harold could feel the thrill of it. If only he could be a member of the "Big Four"!

But the nearest he got to the fray was to share the handle of the water bucket with Hughie Mulligan and rush out upon the field when a Tate man was temporarily knocked out. They would souse the fallen gladiator with the big water-sopped sponge. Harold would feel very mysterious and important as the referee edged over toward him, eavesdropping lest he slip information from Cavendish to the Tate players. And once in a while he would venture to slap a perspiring back and whisper a word of encouragement.

Not that the encouragement was very much needed. Carver proved light and poorly coached. Once the "Big Four" swung into action, the issue was never in doubt. Though Mike Cavendish did his customary raving between the halves and called Velie and Post, the Tate ends, several names for allowing the fleet Carver left halfback, the only outstanding player on the visiting eleven, to make a gain or two around their territories, the Tate players were fairly well pleased with their showing. So, as a matter of fact, was Cavendish. The score at the end of the game was 22 to 0.

Having taken a shower and dressed after the game, Harold was on his way to Commons

for the evening meal when he encountered Dan Sheldon on University Street. For a wonder Garrity wasn't with him.

"Well, if it isn't 'Speedy,' the demon footballer," Sheldon hailed him. "How are things this sunny afternoon down where men are men and necks are nothing? How's my old parlor pal, Mike Cavendish?"

"Didn't you go to the game?" "Speedy" asked in surprise. He thought every Tatian attended the football games.

"Nope—had a previous engagement," grinned Sheldon. "Besides, I'm a nervous man. It weakens me so to see the boys handled so rough. How many touchdowns did you score?"

As a matter of fact, Sheldon had been tipped off by Sam Low, varsity tackle and a classmate of Dan's, as to Harold's status on the Tate squad. Dan had enjoyed a good, malicious laugh at the Freshman's expense, but just now it suited his purposes to treat Harold's football ambitions seriously.

"I didn't get into the game," Harold said soberly.

"No? Hard luck. Well, probably the gentle Cavendish is saving you for the big games later in the season."

Harold wondered if this were really the case.

"But, changing the subject from the sublime to the sublimer," Sheldon continued, "did you see the piece in the 'Tattler' this morning about the Fall Frolic?"

"No, I didn't have a chance to read my 'Tattler' this morning," Harold replied. "What's the Fall Frolic?"

"It's a swell dance given at the Hotel Tate in October every year by the Freshmen in honor of the salt of the earth, namely the honorable Sophomore class. Usually the most regular guy in the Freshman class, the chap that really intends to make something of himself at this man's college, acts as host and throws the party. Chester Trask was the host his Freshman year, and now look where he is."

Dan glanced at Harold significantly, wondering if his description had taken hold. He decided that it had; he was right.

"Well, read the story in the 'Tattler,' 'Speedy,' old boy. And then think it over," Sheldon advised. "Meantime, ta-ta. Come to your old pal Dan if you decide anything and want to know what to do next." And Dan walked, whistling, away.

Harold picked up his copy of the "Tattler" off his desk, where Mrs. Sayre had carefully laid it, as soon as he reached his room.

Lying on his bed he read the item about the Fall Frolic in the "Campus Chatter" column:

WHO'S THE LUCKY FRESHMAN?

As the season for the annual Fall Frolic approaches, the campus is buzzing with rumors as to who will be the genial host at this popular carnival of dance, dames and dazzle. It is a Tate tradition that the Freshman who sponsors the Frolic is "made" for the rest of his college course as far as popularity with the student body is concerned. It is recalled at this time that our great leader, Chester Trask, was host at the Frolic his Freshman year. And look where Trask stands to-day! Freshmen, look into this. Here's your chance to come to the front with a bang!

Harold digested this sprightly piece of news, which was really a disguised invitation, with gusto. Then he had a wild thought. Why shouldn't *he* be the Frolic host? He was a popular man. He was on the football team. Why not crown his activities by sponsoring the Frolic? Chester Trask had done it. If he followed now in Chester's footsteps with this social venture, he would at once become Chester's equal. Nay, even Chester's superior!

In the exuberance of the moment, Harold

slid off his bed, where he had been reclining while he read the "Tattler." He walked over to the wall and revised the respective positions of the photographs of Chester Trask and himself tacked there.

This time he placed his own photograph above that of Chester!

What the "Tattler" neglected to explain in its genial squib was that the undergraduate body was seeking a Freshman with more money than brains, an innocent youngster who would blow the whole college to an elaborate dance at the Hotel Tate at his own expense. The Frolic was not an official social event at Tate University. In fact, it was very generally frowned upon by the college authorities and had been threatened several times with forcible suppression. For, not being held on the campus and hence lacking responsible supervision, the Frolic had frequently resulted in scenes of undue conviviality.

The Frolic was an affair pushed primarily by the Sophomore class, though the whole college attended practically en masse. The Sophomores were responsible for securing the Freshman host. Dan Sheldon was the current head of the informal committee arranged for this purpose. He had from the start had only one host in view—"Speedy" Lamb.

Hardly had Harold completed the operation of shifting the photographs when his door was opened. Briskly Dan Sheldon walked in, smiling like the cat who is about to swallow the canary.

"Well, 'Speedy,' got the dope on the Frolic all right?" Dan asked.

"Yes, I read it," Harold returned.

"Looks like a great chance for you, old kid."

"Why, what do you mean, Dan?" As if Harold did not know what Dan meant.

"Why, you're the ideal host for the Frolic this year, 'Speedy.' It's made to order for you." Dan hitched Harold's other chair up closer and waxed confidential. "Now, looka here. You throw this party and you'll be ab-so-lute-ly king of the campus. Positively guaranteed. Everybody in the whole college will think you're the gnat's collar button. On the level. You'll be able to have anything you want. You'll make a fraternity the minute you're eligible—that means next Fall. You'll make the football team. You'll—"

"You really mean it, Dan?" Harold asked eagerly. "You mean being host at the Frolic will cinch me my place on the team?"

"Sure. You don't think Trask can turn down the guy who's giving the Frolic, do

you? No, sir-r-r, the Frolic host is always on the football team. That's how Trask got his start."

He failed to add that Trask, who had arrived at Tate the greenest of green Freshmen, had always considered the Frolic episode the one adverse mark on his record. Trask *had* given the Frolic. But he had immediately afterward seen the rocks ahead and steered a new course from then on.

Dan Sheldon had Harold going now, and he knew it. He cajoled, flattered, lied, browbeat and pleaded. And eventually Harold yielded to the extent of walking down to the Hotel Tate with Dan and seeing the manager, Howard Estabrook.

Dan tactfully led his victim by a detour through the hotel that took them far from Peggy Sayre's cigar counter. Estabrook looked like a beau of the Victorian age, with his choker collar and Ascot tie, his sharply creased narrow gray trousers and his simpering voice. He had been apprised of Sheldon's errand in advance. He thoroughly understood the purpose of this visit.

"Fifty dollars for the ballroom, say another fifty for the music and refreshments, and twenty more for incidentals—a hundred and twenty dollars in all. Very cheap. And it

ought to do it easy," he lisped liquidly in answer to Harold's question.

"One hundred and twenty bucks to be the king of the campus," Dan added. "Gee, what a bargain!"

Estabrook did not explain that he had given the same estimate to the Freshman Frolic host the previous Fall and the affair had cost that trusting dupe two hundred dollars.

Harold gulped. His heart was now set upon being the Frolic host. It would make him the undisputed campus leader! The whole college would acknowledge his rule! Next to his crowning achievement of making the football team, it would be his proudest effort. But a hundred and twenty dollars! He was already spending more money at Tate than he had bargained for. He would not dare draw such a sum from his account at the Tate National Bank if he was to pay his current college expenses. Well, his mother had $285 left from his washing machine money, "saving it for a rainy day." He would write her and ask her to send him a hundred dollars out of this fund. For surely he could put the Frolic under the head of an emergency expense, an expense that was bound to earn for him much more than it had cost.

He withstood the combined barrage of Estabrook and Sheldon for five more minutes. Then he succumbed. He signed contracts hiring the Hotel Tate ballroom and Jergens' Jazz Jongleurs, the band selected by Sheldon, for the evening of October twenty-fourth. His first shock came when he saw the amounts stipulated for each of the two items was sixty dollars.

When he protested, Estabrook explained innocently, "Well, you want the use of the wardrobe, don't you—ladies' and gents'? I didn't figure that in before. That's ten dollars more. And I didn't know you would insist on the Jongleurs. They're an expensive band, you know." In the case of the band, Estabrook and Sheldon were each extracting a private graft of five dollars.

Harold was a trifle dazed, but still game, as he walked alone out of the Hotel Tate. He caught sight of Peggy, unoccupied for the moment, behind her counter.

"Peggy, I've just signed up to be host at the Fall Frolic on the twenty-fourth," he greeted her jauntily, expecting her congratulations, but a trifle doubtful just the same.

She looked at him as though he had told her something had happened to her mother.

"Harold—you haven't!" she gasped finally.

"Why, yes. What's wrong?"

"You've signed the papers, actually?"

"Sure. Just now with Dan Sheldon and Mr. Estabrook."

She bit her lips impatiently. "Harold, why didn't you talk to me about this before you rushed into it? Don't you know that—"

But she hadn't the heart to continue.

"You'll go with me, won't you, Peggy? You'll be my partner the night of the Frolic?" he asked hopefully.

"No—I can't," she replied impatiently. "I have to be on duty here when there's a dance. I couldn't be a guest. It's impossible."

His face fell. He tried coaxing, but it was no use. He finally departed with the uneasy impression that Peggy somehow did not approve of the step he had taken.

Between football and preparations for his début as a dance host, the next ten days were packed with activities. Under Dan Sheldon's tuition, Harold had cards engraved neatly like this:

HAROLD "SPEEDY" LAMB
REQUESTS THE HONOR OF YOUR COMPANY,
AT THE
ANNUAL TATE FALL FROLIC
HOTEL TATE
SATURDAY, OCTOBER THE TWENTY-FOURTH
FORMAL JERGENS' JAZZ JONGLEURS

"If you put Jergens on the invitation, they'll know it's a regular party," Dan had explained. "Those babies can certainly knock out the hot mamma jazz."

Peggy, though she had declined Harold's invitation in advance, received one of the handsomely engraved cards through the mail. She read it thoughtfully, sensing the spirit with which "Speedy's" début as a dance host was being received throughout the campus. And Peggy's surmise as to the way the invitations were hailed was quite correct. Chums hailed each other and exhibited the bids jovially to each other. Classroom recitations were almost broken up as the students doubled up with laughter at this latest ridiculous move of " 'Speedy' the Spender."

Meanwhile, the innocent host was worried about the "formal" item on the invitation. In Sanford he had worn his father's dress suit, but he had picked up the information since coming to Tate that dress suits in collegiate circles were passé. Tuxedos were the correct thing.

Harold brought from his desk drawer the elaborate advertising card of a local tailor. It bore a fancy drawing of a super-elegant young man attired in an immaculate tuxedo, with this legend:

Handsome tuxedo coat and pants
like this:

$38.50

MORRIS HERTZ

The College Tailor

28 University Street

Harold paid a business visit to Morris Hertz that evening. The outside of Mr. Hertz's emporium was very unprepossessing. It was located in the poorer section of Tate, a one-story rickety wooden shop lighted by a hissing gas burner. As Harold doubtfully pushed open the door, a bell jangled, warning the tailor in his single-room apartment in the rear of the shop that a customer had entered. Harold stood for five minutes in the empty, dusty store before the proprietor appeared wiping his butter-stained lips with the back of his hand.

In response to Harold's question, the tailor rolled out a bolt of black goods.

"Sure I can make you a tuxedo," he assured the Freshman. "Just like the one on my card. Thirty-eight fifty. Gar'nteed fine job."

"Can you have it done by the twenty-fourth —sure?" Harold asked.

The tailor frowned. "Well, that's pretty short notice." He gave an imitation of Rodin's "Le Penseur." In the end, out of a deep study, he announced, "I can do it. I will have it for you six o'clock of the twenty-fourth. All right?"

Harold decided that it would have to be.

"Fine," said Morris Hertz. "Stand on the stool and I will measure you right away."

Harold obeyed. He mounted the worn plush stool. Hertz hovered around him with tape measure, paper and the stub of a pencil. He wielded the measure in the flickering gas light and, licking the pencil, made cryptic figures down on the dirty scrap of paper. Suddenly, however, the tailor paused. The measure and pencil dropped to the floor. Hertz's hand went unsteadily to his head. He reeled. His limp body fell against Harold. The Freshman was frightened and wondered what to do.

But he was not kept long in suspense. A harassed-looking woman with spectacles riding her nose, a baby held under one arm and a bottle of brandy in her other hand, came hurrying into the room. She did not seem greatly alarmed. Without a word she handed her baby over to Harold to hold. She poured some of the brandy into the pale-faced man.

"It's one of his dizzy spells," she apologized

to Harold. "A little brandy always fixes him right up."

Her prediction proved true, for in a few minutes the tailor's eyes blinked open. He shook his head, like a dog emerging from water. He stood upright and was apparently as good as new.

"Just a little fainting spell," he explained to Harold. "It don't amount to nothing."

He resumed his measurements, his wife now having volunteered to write down the numbers as he called them out. Harold, meantime, holding the baby, was uncertain what to do with the wriggling infant. The tailor wanted to measure his arms and there was no place to deposit the youngest Hertz. With a flash of inspiration Harold placed the baby between his legs and lifted his arms triumphantly aloft to have the tape laid upon them.

When the tailor had quite finished, Harold was still uneasy about that fainting spell. How often did they afflict Morris Hertz and interfere with his work?

"There's no danger of not having my suit ready for the party, is there?" he asked the tailor.

"Don't worry, young man," returned that worthy impatiently. "It will be ready."

With this assurance the Freshman had to be satisfied. He left the dingy tailor shop

with the promise to return in five days for the first fitting. When he told Peggy about the bargain tuxedo, she for some occult reason did not enthuse. She made the same comment that she had troubled him with when he broke the news that he was the Frolic host.

"Why didn't you tell me you wanted a tuxedo?" she asked him.

Harold did not fancy this question. Why was she always asking him to consult her about things anyway? Didn't she think him capable of managing his affairs?

"Why?" he asked rather ungraciously.

"Well, you know," explained Peggy, "when you buy something like a tuxedo, something you only have to get once in a good many years, you ought to get a good one."

"Hertz makes good clothes. His card says so."

"I know," Peggy indulged him. "But Mr. Bryon, of Rivers Brothers, the finest tailors in New York, stops at the Hotel Tate. He's an old friend of father's. Father, when he was alive, used to get a lot of business for Mr. Bryon. I could have spoken to him and he would have sold you the best there is, at a discount."

"Well, probably Hertz is just as good," Harold insisted stubbornly. "Besides, I believe in patronizing home industry."

"I hope you come out all right, I'm sure," replied Peggy pertly, elevating her small nose a little.

Harold watched her disappear into the Sayre living room with mingled resentment and a childish desire to rush in after her and tell her she was, as usual, right. He had an impulse to put himself into her hands, to confess to her he was worried, to ask her advice about this whole complicated business of the Frolic.

But then the stubborn pride that was his inheritance from Henry Lamb asserted itself. Peggy Sayre was assuming too much. She was acting as if she owned him. She had turned him down as her escort for the Frolic. On a legitimate excuse, to be sure. But was it legitimate? He guessed she could have gotten off that evening if she had wanted to. She had refused him, maybe, because she was peeved that he had announced himself as Frolic host without consulting her. Well, he'd show her. He had to have a girl for the Frolic. Golly, the host himself couldn't go stag.

He went out to Blanchard's Drug Store, around the corner on University Street, and telephoned to the only other Tate girl he knew —Grace Beach.

The giggling Delphine answered the tele-

phone. Mr. Lamb? "Speedy" Lamb? Well —she would see if Grace was home.

"Hello, Mr. Lamb," came the melting accents of the college widow over the wire. "You're quite a stranger. It's a treat to hear your voice again."

"I'm host at the Frolic, you know, and—" Harold began hesitantly. Now that he actually had Grace on the 'phone, he wanted to slam up the receiver and run out of the store.

Miss Beach interrupted him. "I heard the good news—and it's simply wonderful. It must be marvelous to be so rich and generous. And it's going to make you so popular. I don't suppose you'll even look at poor little me from now on."

"What I called you up for," Harold stammered, "was to ask you to be my partner at the Frolic." His voice trailed off, "I think—it would be—nice."

Deep silence. Miss Beach was considering this unexpected proposition. She made her decision.

She cooed in a voice that would have melted butter. "That would be *too* wonderful. I'd love to, Mr. Lamb—'Speedy,' if I may be so bold as to call you that. I'm tickled pink. Mr. Trask—Leonard Trask—is escorting my cousin Delphine. We'll make just a jolly little party. Thank you *so* much."

When she had replaced the receiver, poor Grace Beach's brow was knitted. Had she made a mistake in accepting this rube Freshman's invitation to the Frolic? Leonard Trask had invited her cousin Delphine and Grace had expected that Joe Bartlett, Leonard's roommate, would extend a similar invitation to her. They were nice, good-looking boys and Joe had one of the finest cars in Tate.

But Joe had not offered himself as her escort. Indeed she began grudgingly to suspect that it was only Bartlett's loyalty to his roommate that had in the past led him to play the cavalier to Grace on the various excursions when the two Westoverians accompanied Delphine and her older cousin.

And Grace wanted desperately to go to the Frolic. Last year she had not been invited and had wept over it for quite some time. She did not want to admit the Tate students were beginning to overlook her in their social affairs.

And so she had accepted Harold's invitation. If Joe Bartlett asked her later—well, she would have to think of some excuse for sidetracking "Speedy."

CHAPTER XIII

THE pretentious ballroom of the Hotel Tate was aglow with light, youth and color. Tate pennants, interspersed with rectangular banners bearing the legends "Tate 1928" and "Tate 1929," decorated the walls. The Tate colors, red and white, looped from all sides of the ceiling in streamers to the huge crystal chandelier in the center. From behind skillfully concealing palms in one corner of the big room came the shuffling, syncopated din of Jergens' Jazz Jongleurs. And out on the shiny, glassy smooth floor danced the chivalry and beauty of Tate, crowded, gay, and a little rowdyish. The more adventuresome of the couples were dancing the "Charleston," that hilarious, joint-twisting novelty imported from the Negro dance dives of Birmingham and New Orleans and sweeping the country like an epidemic.

The Fall Frolic. The crowning achievement of " 'Speedy' the Spender." And everybody was there but "Speedy"!

"It's after ten o'clock. I wonder what can be keeping 'Speedy'?" was the question of the hour.

Dan Sheldon, who had been substituting

for Harold by receiving the guests at the ballroom door, was as mystified as anybody by the Freshman's unaccounted absence. Dan stood for a lot of good-natured chaffing. He was feeling fine. Wasn't the goat of the evening his discovery?

To his pal Garrity, Dan confided, "Estabrook must have handed 'Speedy' the bill in advance, and 'Speedy' probably dropped dead."

From her place behind the counter at the gentlemen's wardrobe near the cigar stand, Peggy Sayre was worried too. She continued receiving coats and hats and handing out checks to the tuxedo-attired males. And she kept on monotonously intoning to their female companions, "Ladies' cloakroom upstairs and to the right." But she was holding a weather eye out for Harold and—Grace Beach. What ever had become of him? There was only one possible reason for his lateness, she decided, that tuxedo! She was, as usual, right. Harold Lamb, minus coat and trousers, was at that moment hopping nervously from one foot to the other in the dimly lighted tailor shop of Morris Hertz waiting for his $38.50 tuxedo suit to be finished.

The tailor himself, harassed and perspiring in every pore, was wielding his needle with a fast, furious but clumsy hand. He had been

enjoying a rapid succession of dizzy spells during the past week, delaying the work. He had warned Harold that another spell would surely come on if the Freshman did not stop berating him and fidgeting.

Harold glanced at his watch for the hundredth time. Ten o'clock.

"Where's the telephone?" he asked the tailor wildly.

Hertz pointed it out, half concealed under a heap of trousers waiting to be dry cleaned. Harold called Grace Beach's number.

"Well, it's about time!" came her unmistakably irritated accents over the wire.

"Listen, Miss Beach," Harold explained nervously. "I'm unexpectedly delayed. An accident. I can't come for you for half an hour or so. I'm terribly sorry. But it isn't my fault—really. I tell you what you do. No use your missing any of the fun. Call up the taxi man out in front of the Tate. 126 is the number. Have him come around for you and take you to the Frolic. I'll pay the bill. Then I'll hurry along as soon as I can and meet you there."

"That's a pretty way to go to a dance, isn't it?" Grace said sarcastically. But she decided to make the best of it. Yes, she would call the taxi. Harold clapped up the receiver and mopped his brow.

He walked hurriedly back to the tailor and stood over him glowering and worried.

"With the whole college waiting, you pick out a day like this for dizzy spells!" berated "Speedy."

Morris Hertz, perspiring and harassed, bit a final thread off and hastily turned over the tuxedo coat and trousers to his irate customer. With an exclamation of relief, Harold thrust a leg into the new garment and then another.

"I only had time to baste the suit. So be careful. It's just loosely stitched together," warned the tailor, made uneasy by the violent haste with which Harold was donning the suit.

Harold fastened suspenders to the trousers and flung them over his shoulders. The legs were too long, but he couldn't help that now. He picked the longest of the white threads off. He plunged into the coat and transferred his money and watch rapidly from his street clothes.

"Easy—easy—EASY," begged Morris Hertz. Then as Harold, snatching up his hat, bounded out of the door, the tailor turned his anxiety about the suit into action.

"I'd better go with you in case anything happens," Morris Hertz shouted after the retreating form of Harold. The tailor snatched up needle and thread and started out into

University Street after the speeding Freshman.

When Harold reached the street, there was not a sign of a conveyance in sight. He commenced at once to walk and covered the half mile between Hertz's and the Hotel Tate in record time. He stopped only at the florist shop near the hotel to buy a bouquet of flowers for Peggy Sayre. Even in his excitement about his tuxedo and his uncertainty as to the garment's durability, he was thinking of Peggy. He was more disappointed than he would admit even to himself that she was not to be his partner at the Frolic. Any faint resentment he might recently have held against her had vanished. He wanted to do something for Peggy that would show this. He wanted to give her something that would make her feel that she was part of the Frolic too, something that would give a hint of the deep regard he had for her. So he took some time and money and bought her a modest bouquet.

Meantime, Peggy was genuinely worried. She had seen Grace Beach arrive, alone. She had observed Delphine Smythe stroll laughingly in, accompanied by Leonard Trask and Joe Bartlett. But there was no sign of Harold!

Then, at quarter to eleven, he came racing

in, to her infinite relief. At once he bustled up to her.

"Hello, Peggy," he greeted her. "Think I'd never get here? Neither did I. Hertz got sick and my clothes weren't done." He calmed down a little and added somewhat shyly, "And here's something I got for you. If I can't have you for a partner, I can at least show you I'm thinking about you."

She was more pleased than she could tell him. She pressed her pretty face into the flowers and inhaled their fragrance. She looked tenderly over them at Harold and smiled.

"Thank you ever so much, Harold," she said simply. "I love flowers. And I appreciate your thoughtfulness."

He gazed back at her, his deep regard for her showing in his candid blue eyes. In that moment he had a wish just to stay there with Peggy, to bask in her loveliness, to forget the dance.

But in the next moment Dan Sheldon had discovered him. Hustling up to "Speedy" the Sophomore greeted him effusively. Dan clapped upon the head of the Freshman one of the elaborate cone-shaped paper hats with streamers that many of the other guests were wearing. He led Harold out of the lobby to the entrance to fairyland.

"All hail our host!" Dan cried loudly to the dancers, indicating Harold.

Instantly the crowd came surging up to them, warm, laughing.

"All hail our host!" cried the dancers.

Harold was delighted. He did not realize they were mocking him.

He stood surrounded with shouting, grinning faces. The lion of the hour! If this didn't make him more popular even than Chester Trask, nothing would! Then they were pulling and hawling at him again. Something gave way along the back seam of Harold's new tuxedo. A look of dismay started into his face. But it disappeared as he felt a needle directed by a skillful hand at once pierce the cloth at the point it had given way. He glanced around to discover, to his surprise, Morris Hertz making rapid and secret repairs. Morris, having followed Harold all the way to the Frolic, was now proving a rescuing angel. Harold at once started shouting and bantering with everybody in sight.

Grace Beach emerged from the crowd, thinking it time to show the world that she hadn't come alone to the Frolic after all. Smiling her best, she approached Harold rapidly and, seizing his hand, jerked him smartly toward the ballroom floor. Hertz, still cling-

ing to the Freshman's coat, was tumbled in a heap against a potted palm plant. The plant went crashing to the floor. So did Hertz. But in the excitement nobody paid any particular attention to the tailor or his fall.

Then Harold had Grace in his arms and they were out on the ballroom floor dancing. Jergens' Jazz Jongleurs were rendering their special version of "Freshie," a new collegiate fox trot. Around him were women's white shoulders. Slicked-up youths. Bright colors and lights. Joy unconfined.

On their second turn around the crowded floor, Harold noticed the anxious face of Morris Hertz peering out from behind a curtain that was part of the ballroom's decorations. One of the tables, on which refreshments would be served later, was located just in front of the curtain. From this Hertz had managed to secure the little push-bell used for summoning the waiter. He wiggled a hand to Harold, who caught sight of him from behind Grace's shoulder. Harold maneuvered his partner over toward Hertz's hiding place. Dancing deftly around in front of the curtain so that he was always within earshot of the concealed Hertz, the Freshman learned the reason for the tailor's signaling.

"If anything rips, I'll ring this bell," Hertz explained hoarsely.

Harold nodded and danced away.

An instant later this clever precaution of the tailor's almost caused Harold heart failure. For as the Freshman and his rather awkwardly dancing consort cavorted quite near to the row of tables, a bell rang out. Harold looked at once toward the curtain concealing Hertz, but all was quiet there. Then "Speedy" gazed cautiously around in other quarters and discovered, to his relief, that Leonard Trask, seated at a near-by table with Delphine, had pushed the bell in the effort to divert their way some of the refreshments that would soon be served.

But as the music stopped and the dancers, disengaging themselves from their partners, started to adjourn to the tables, there came catastrophe for the eager "Speedy."

He had given Grace his arm and, striving to chat with her and apologize for his delay in arriving, had walked with her toward a vacant table. But now she suddenly saw Leonard Trask and Delphine on the other side of the room and wanted to hurry over to them through the crowds still blocking the floor. Abruptly she pulled her arm out from under Harold's. And his right coat-sleeve, already weakened at the shoulder by his strenuous dancing, came with Grace's arm. It

caught on a hook in the back of the college widow's dress.

Totally unconscious of the damage she had wrought and of the fact that she was retaining her escort's coat sleeve, Grace tripped rapidly through the mob in the direction of Delphine. Harold, in an agony of embarrassment, striving to ignore the surprised smiles of the people as he passed, hurried after her. Passing Jergens' Jazz Jongleurs, temporarily resting on their little raised platform from their labors, he spotted what he thought at first was his missing sleeve. Had Grace dropped it by accident? He snatched at the piece of black cloth lying near the orchestra platform and pulled it over his white shirt sleeve. Then he discovered that it was the protective cloth cover on the slide trombone.

Finally, in the maze, he located Grace laughing and chatting with some friends. Hoping to cause as little trouble as possible, he yanked his missing sleeve from her dress, where she still innocently held it, and made off without a word. Thus he did not see her turn sharply to the young man standing beside her and slap him soundly in the face for what she esteemed his impertinence for snatching at her dress!

Pushing the loose sleeve surreptitiously back into place, Harold, now red-faced and per-

spiring, sought the attentions of Morris Hertz. Reaching the curtain behind which he had last seen the tailor, he found Hertz's tousled head poked out anxiously in search of him.

"Get back and sew this sleeve on," Harold said in a low, rapid voice. Then, observing Dan Sheldon headed his way, he added, "I'll stand outside here and poke my arm in to you."

One of Harold's arms was thus submitting to the tailor's first-aid administrations when dapper Dan came hurrying up to his host.

"'Speedy,' old pal, can you let me have ten dollars?" Sheldon requested breezily. "We've got to tip some of these waiters and attendants around here."

"But—I thought my contract covered all the extras," Harold started to protest.

"Now, now, 'Speedy,' don't turn piker at this late hour—after you've pulled such a whale of a party," soothed and warned Dan.

But Harold turned obstinate. He did not intend to give Dan the money.

He had not, however, reckoned upon Morris Hertz. The tailor had overheard the conversation. He thought Harold was hesitating because he could not reach his pocket. So Morris, wishing to oblige, himself extracted a bill from the Freshman's trouser pocket.

Hertz then thrust his own hand with the money out from the curtain and into the extended paw of Dan Sheldon. Harold looked down in surprise. To his dismay he discovered that the tailor had delivered a twenty-dollar bill to Dan! He could not allow that. He must get it back. He waited until Dan turned to speak to a girl who had come up to him. Then Harold reached over and deftly lifted the money from the Sophomore's vest pocket, where the latter had carelessly pushed it.

The girl who had attracted the attention of the unfortunate Sheldon proved to be Grace Beach. She had been hob-nobbing with Joe Bartlett and Leonard Trask and others. She was feeling rather kittenish. She now came gayly up to Harold and seized his free hand.

"Let's go and eat, Harold," she cried. "I'm starved!"

She attempted to pull him away. But Morris Hertz, from behind the curtain, held fast. Harold, hardly knowing what to do, nervously ran his fingers up and down the side of his trousers. With fatal effect! For the thread at which he was agitatedly plucking was the basting cord holding together his trouser leg. As he pulled at it, he felt a cool breeze strike his bare flesh. He looked down

in sudden horror, hoping against hope. But in vain. His gartered leg was exposed to the world!

Grace had taken a seat at the table near the curtain. Harold hastily sank down opposite her. His damaged sleeve had been repaired and he now thrust his uncovered leg in for Hertz's busy attentions.

"Are you having a good time?" Grace asked him curiously.

"Why—yes," he answered.

"You don't look it," she observed. "You look tired and worried."

"A fellow can't be host at the Frolic and not think about it a little bit," Harold offered loftily.

But he stopped talking abruptly and almost fell out of his chair as Hertz pricked his bare flesh viciously. An instant later Harold actually did sink to the floor as a dead weight suddenly struck the leg that was back of the curtain. Without stopping to explain to Grace, he jumped up and rushed around the curtain. As he had expected, Morris Hertz had chosen this psychological moment to indulge in one of his dizzy spells!

By the time Harold bent over him, however, the tailor was recovering.

"I'd be all right if I only could get a little drink," the ill man mumbled.

Harold hesitated. He had observed glints of silver out there on the ballroom floor when tuxedo coat-tails occasionally were flipped up over hip pockets in the gyrations of the "Charleston." The music had started up again. The guests were dancing. He would see what he could do.

He returned to Grace and suggested, "Let's dance a while till the food comes."

She agreed rather reluctantly. She was hungry and Harold's dancing was not the sort one starves for. But she decided to be agreeable. The floor was as crowded as ever, Harold saw to his satisfaction. He must lift a flask from some unsuspecting dancer's hip pocket. It would not be stealing. It would be for the purpose of saving somebody's life. After several misadventures he succeeded in getting possession of one of the precious containers. As he did so, he almost dropped it again. Standing near him on the side lines was Chester Trask, whom Harold now saw for the first time that evening. He watched Chester anxiously and then decided that the football captain had not observed his feat.

He would have dashed up and spoken to Chester had he not feared the tailor would suffer a relapse.

Retreating toward the curtain again, with a hastily muttered excuse to Grace, he slipped

the flask to Hertz and was pleased to see it result in a complete recovery. The tailor completed the job on Harold's trouser leg and the Freshman rejoined Grace, who was tapping her foot impatiently and looking annoyed indeed. This was certainly the worst jumping-jack of a partner she had ever been blessed with!

In another second he was off again!

For his eyes had turned in the direction of Peggy Sayre's counter. He had seen her pluck a daisy from the bouquet he had brought to her and play the ancient game of "He loves me, he loves me not" with it. He danced slowly around in the same spot observing her expectantly. She pulled the last petal. It said—"He loves me." Peggy buried her pretty face in Harold's flowers and kissed them.

That was enough for Harold. He dashed out through the crowds joyously toward her, the wonderful news ringing in his mind that Peggy loved him! Nearing her counter, he slowed down and approached her stealthily.

Her face was still buried in the flowers. Harold Lamb smiled and forgot his troubles. A great warmth spread inside of him. Peggy loved him! He slipped behind her counter and, without her suspecting his presence, swept her into his arms. He smothered her

gasp with a kiss. When he released her, he smiled into her horrified face. Her fright disappeared as she recognized him. She blushed and buried her face in his shoulder.

"Do you like me that much, Peggy?" he whispered to her, still holding her in his arms.

He did not want to leave her. He just wanted to stay there and talk to Peggy and bask in her loveliness. He slipped up upon the turnstile bar fencing off the cloakroom entrance from the main part of the lobby. He swung back and forth there for an instant.

Then suddenly came a sharp voice like the crack of doom. So suddenly and unexpectedly that Harold, startled, lost his balance, fell backward and just caught himself in time to avoid landing on his head on the floor. He escaped a bad tumble, but the shock and fall had jerked the loosely fastened suspender buttons from the back of his trousers!

To add to his worries, he now looked up to find Grace Beach, red of face and ireful, standing on the other side of the counter and almost shrieking, "So this is what you left me to do!"

"As for you, young lady, I'll report you at once," she snapped at Peggy.

"You'll do nothing of the kind. We're—

we're engaged. Aren't we, Peggy?" retorted Harold promptly.

But Peggy was silent.

"Well, you're certainly the gentlemanly host," Grace turned upon Harold. "First you keep me waiting half the night. Then you sneak away to kiss coat-room attendants. I'm through with you, Mr. 'Speedy' Lamb. Joe Bartlett has offered to act as my escort for the rest of the evening, and I've accepted. He's at least a gentleman. Good night."

"GOOD NIGHT!" cried Harold with an unexpected flash of spirit. Peggy secretly applauded.

Then a young whirlwind of femininity came whisking in and, laying hold of Harold, jerked him away from Peggy. Dan Sheldon had dared his girl, a wild little flapper from Miss Davis's Select School, in North Tate, to rush "Speedy" and drag him back to the dance floor. The flapper was overdoing it. She yanked him with all the strength of her lithe young body, yanked him until the rest of the frail buttons holding his trousers to his suspenders snapped with a sickening crack. Helpless though protesting, he was pulled madly out upon the floor into the presence of the snickering Tatians.

His trousers were falling. He made wild clutches at them. His suspenders slipped

down his back, his legs and onto the floor. They became mixed up with the feet of the dancers, embarrassing the girls and astounding the men.

Then calamity followed swiftly upon calamity for Harold. He edged over toward a table and picked up a fork as he danced by. He intended to hold his trousers to his dress shirt with this utensil if possible. He caught the fork into a button hole at the back. But unfortunately the fork was caught to the tablecloth also. Off came the tablecloth laden with ice cream, candy, demi-tasse cups and water glasses!

A waiter came bustling up, attracted by the crash, and seized the tablecloth. When, forked to Harold's trousers, it would not come for him, the waiter jerked at it. This was too much for the loosely basted seams of the Freshman's pants. Off came the whole rear section! The waiter disappeared with the tablecloth and the torn portion of the trousers out through a back door. Harold, attempting to follow him, clutched at his own waist in the back in a wild endeavor to keep his pants up. They fell down in front!

In a panic he started to rush through the crowd. Dancers roared, shouted, squealed. Then realizing the situation—that their host was arrayed in a trick tuxedo and had been

waging an unsuccessful battle to conceal the fact all evening—they fell upon him. They snatched at his clothes. They wanted souvenirs. His coat parted. The rest of his trousers were pulled off. Arrayed only in his underwear, dress shirt and the sleeves of his missing coat, he fled crazily from the room.

Through the pandemonium rolled the syncopated din of Jergens' Jazz Jongleurs.

Into the lobby of the Tate Harold rushed pell-mell. The nearest refuge offered was a telephone booth. He darted into this retreat and slammed the door after him. For a moment he leaned against the inside of the booth recovering his breath and his sanity. After a time he realized he could not stay there all night. But what to do?

Harold looked hopefully about. He saw a bell boy come whistling down the lobby bearing a tuxedo suit on his arm from the hotel valet shop and destined for a roomer. The trousers were resting temptingly on the careless youth's arm. Harold resolved upon a desperate chance. As the messenger passed, the Freshman opened the telephone booth door a little, darted a hand out and caught the coat and trousers deftly without the bell-boy seeing him.

Inside the booth Harold inspected his loot. He tried them on. They were a trifle small,

but otherwise they fitted perfectly. He made a silent prayer for forgiveness. Twice a thief in the same night! But each time surely for an excellent cause.

Observing to his relief that the new trousers were tight enough around the waist to stay up without belt or suspenders, he stepped out of the booth and resolved to tell Peggy of his cleverness in escaping from dire disaster.

CHAPTER XIV

As Harold hustled along the lobby his heart was approximately light for the first time that evening. Peggy was fond of him. He had a new and, presumably, unrippable tuxedo on. He had rid himself of Grace Beach. The world was fairly all right.

But as he neared Peggy's cloakroom, he stopped and stared. Coats on their hooks were bobbing about in a strangely agitated manner. Several felt hats fell to the floor. A struggle was going on. Harold sprang quickly in the direction of the commotion as he heard a little feminine cry. It sounded like Peggy!

Rushing through the coats and canes, he came upon a sight that made the blood rush into his head. Peggy was fighting a losing battle against Dan Sheldon, who, his arms locked around her, was trying furiously to press his red face against hers. Peggy was writhing and battling with all the strength of her healthy little body, pounding his chest vainly with her small fists. With a final wrench, Dan pinned her wrists and bent her backward at the waist.

Then a pile-driver smote the ambitious Sophomore squarely on the chin. He dropped to the floor like a log. A whole constellation of stars rainbowed from his brain. It was a full minute before his senses returned and his eyes could focus upon anything but a blur. Then he saw Harold Lamb, panting, and with fists still clenched, standing menacingly over him.

Having delivered the blow, Harold was for an instant frightened at the havoc his fist had wrought. He thought he had severely hurt Dan. He was relieved to see the Sophomoric eyes open again. Harold stood, an arm protectingly around the trembling shoulders of Peggy, ready to leap to the fray again if Dan threatened. But the Sophomore was all out of physical fight for that evening. Harold's blow had drained the energy out of him.

But as Sheldon struggled to his feet, his face was livid with rage. To be thwarted, to be knocked down by "Speedy" of all people. "Speedy" the rube, the butt, the goat. Dan lost all his suaveness, his pretense of friendship for the Freshman. His real wasp-like nature asserted itself with a rush. His lips were set in an ugly line. He glared malignantly out of misty eyes at Peggy and Harold as the red welt on his chin slowly spread.

"Just for that, you little fool," hurled Dan

at "Speedy," "I'm going to tell you what this bunch really thinks of you."

Peggy raised her head and made a helpless little gesture to stop him. "No, no, Dan," she begged in a whisper.

But Dan went remorselessly on. "You think you're a regular fellow, don't you?" he sneered. "Why, you're nothing but the college boob!"

Harold's face clouded. He looked uncomprehendingly at Dan. Hurt. Astonished. Peggy, sympathy streaming from her face, peered anxiously at Harold.

But the angry Dan was not yet through. He fairly shouted, "Ever since you came to college, we've just been kidding you—look—"

Dan swept his arm in toward the ballroom. It was the intermission in the dancing. The orchestra had adjourned to side tables for their refreshments. The dancers were in the center of the floor waiting for the waiters to push out the tables and bring the food. Evidently everybody thought their host had departed for good and it was the time to be natural about him, to enjoy the long pent-up laugh at his expense.

In spite of himself, Harold looked. Surrounded by a group of admirers of his mimicry, Garrity was executing the celebrated jig step of Lester Laurel and "Speedy" Lamb,

finishing with the absurd posture and the cocky invitation, "I'm just a regular fellow. Step right up and call me 'Speedy.'" Flappers screamed with delight. Students guffawed. Other collegians in various corners of the room mimicked the "Speedy" step. The room was filled with jiggers and laughter. Somebody started singing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," but the song broke up in sarcastic merriment before the first stanza was ended. Another group shouted "'Speedy' Lamb is a good old soul," and were answered by a gathering from the other side of the room yelling "Sure, he's the boob that pays the toll!"

Then "Speedy," silent and shocked, saw Chester Trask walk out to the center of the floor and talk with some of the ring-leaders of the scandalous mirthfulness. Chester was grave-faced and was evidently protesting.

But Harold did not wait to see any more. He turned helplessly to Dan Sheldon, who walked by him with an air of sneering triumph and on out to the dance floor. Harold's stricken eyes followed his tormentor. Then they turned reluctantly to Peggy. She was regarding him with a look of infinite pity. She loved this poor, misguided boy even more than her own heart knew. She wished she could shield him, protect him forever. There

was the look of both a mother and a sweetheart in her soft eyes. And there was a suggestion of tears too.

She pitied him. She was terribly anxious to know how he would take Dan's words. She was fearful that the Freshman's sensitive heart and his high spirit were broken.

Harold, still looking at her, tossed his head as if to rid himself of an irksome burden. He forced a smile into his white face. Then he tried to say jauntily, "It doesn't bother me a bit, really, Peggy. A fellow has to expect these things, you know. Every man who has amounted to anything has been misunderstood like this. It's—nothing."

But as he continued to stare at her, his eyes slowly filled with tears. His lips twitched. His body seemed to be crumbling. And suddenly, with a choked sob, he flung himself at Peggy's feet. She sank into a chair, his head in her arms. And she let him sob as if his heart would break, while she gently stroked his tousled black hair—as his mother used to do. For a moment his body was racked and tortured by his tears. Then he shivered, pulled himself together, raised his tear-stained face to hers and tried again to smile. At last he succeeded and forced himself to his feet.

The memory of her warm arms around him

was still in his mind and helped him to recover and feel strong again. Peggy's eyes, regarding him earnestly, showed relief as he straightened and looked at her. Her face became bright with the look of a crusader.

"Harold, you haven't been true to yourself," she told him frankly. "You've been pretending to be what you thought they wanted you to be."

Harold smarted a little at this revelation. But he had to admit it was true. He made as if to speak, but thought better of it and was silent.

Peggy clenched small fists, narrowed her eyes and thrust out her small, smooth chin as if she too were about to attack some lurking Dan Sheldon.

"Stop pretending, Harold!" she cried. "Be yourself! Get out and make them like you for what you really are and what you can do!"

Harold was as deeply stirred by the grim vehemence of her words as by their import. The same fiery spirit that gripped her adorable body assailed his too. He had never loved her so much as now. He would willingly die for her. Die for her if it would show her and Tate that he had the stuff in him that heroes are made of! No task would be too great, no risk too dangerous!

His body stiffened and he clenched his fists too. His blue eyes were alight with battle.

He cried, "There's just one chance left—if I ever get into that big game with Union State, I'll show them!"

"I know you will!" was Peggy's ringing answer and she patted him confidently, tenderly upon the back. She believed in her Freshman with all her heart. She kissed him impulsively and then she said, more subdued, "But I think you've had enough Frolic for to-night, Harold. You'd better find Grace Beach and take her home."

"Oh, do I have to do that?" he asked, dismayed.

"Well, you're her escort and you ought to act like a gentleman. If she's already left with somebody else—you will have done your duty anyway."

"I suppose so," he said reluctantly. He hesitated. "I'll see you in the morning, Peggy," he promised. He stepped over timidly and kissed her cheek and was off.

He rather hoped that Grace had induced Joe Bartlett or somebody else to take her home. He resolved to make his search for her a rather cursory one, influenced somewhat by the fact that he didn't want to face the eyes of his guests just at that particular time. When they looked at him next, he wanted to

have something real to show them, something that would make them hail "Speedy" Lamb as another Chester Trask!

The music had temporarily stopped. It occurred to Harold that the most likely place to find Grace was in one of the many alcoves opening out from the ballroom. They were retreats where the dancers retired to rest, smoke and chat. He accordingly walked around the lobby and approached the dance floor from a side entrance. He looked into the first of the little alcoves, pushing aside the fancy screen that assured its privacy, and found it unoccupied. He went on to the next one and was about to take hold of its screen when familiar voices reached his ear from the other side of the barrier. He caught the import of what one of the voices was saying and he took his hand from the screen and paused to listen. He had no desire to eavesdrop; he would have preferred to walk in and ask Grace Beach if his services as an escort were any longer required. But somehow he conceived it his duty to stay his steps a moment.

Joe Bartlett's nasal twang was saying merrily, "If you and Delphine like each other so much, Leonard, why don't you give a real kick to this dance by going off and getting married?"

"What—to-night?" he heard Grace giggle.

"Sure."

"Oh, how romantic!" Grace sighed.

"I tell you what, Len," Joe went on, "I'll bet you five hundred bucks you and Delphine haven't got the nerve to elope."

Leonard Trask's voice now cut in a little hesitantly, but defiantly, "What do you say, Delphine? Are you game? Shall we show this smart young man up? Are you willing?"

"Dr. Mitchell, up at Ridgefield, three miles from here, will marry you," Grace offered excitedly. "They call him the 'marrying parson.' "

"Sure he will," chimed in Leonard, thoroughly aroused now and a little out of his head. "Will you, Delphine?"

Delphine giggled. She sighed, "Oh, Leonard, are you sure you love me?"

"Yes, I'm crazy about you. Let's go. Let's elope."

"Imagine—my own cousin and a guest at my house!" murmured Grace. "I never heard of anything so romantic."

"Come on then. Let's get going," warned Leonard.

Harold was dumbstruck. He couldn't believe Leonard Trask was himself. The son of the famous John Trask and the brother

of Chester marrying that silly little Delphine! He couldn't love her. Leonard must be just carried away with the excitement and frivolity of the dance, that crazy bet of Joe's and the urgings of the girls. Harold felt, as the only sensible person present, he ought to do something. Golly, he *would* do something!

He turned and hurried toward the ballroom, regardless of the looks of the dancers directed his way. He could not find the object of his search in the ballroom. Nor in the alcoves around. Nor in the lobby. Near the swinging door of the Hotel Tate entrance he located him, his hat on and his overcoat on his arm.

Chester Trask looked somewhat worried and Harold suspected Leonard was the cause of it.

The Freshman approached Chester quietly. "Captain Trask, will you come with me?" he requested pointedly. "It's about your brother."

Chester paled a little and followed the Freshman without a word. Harold led the way back to the screen behind which he had eavesdropped. He put his hand on Chester and held the college hero back an instant.

"All right then, it's settled, Delphine," came the voice of Leonard briskly. "We'll

all take Joe's car and ride to Ridgefield and Delphine and I will officially elope. You and Grace can be witnesses, Joe."

The screen was pushed to one side and the quartet stepped hurriedly out, to confront Chester and Harold.

Chester took his brother's arm at once. "Say good night to your friends, Leonard," the football captain snapped. "You're coming home with me."

The girls squealed in surprise. Joe Bartlett looked a little frightened. Leonard attempted to get his arm free, to oppose his brother.

"Let me go, Chester," he cried angrily. "I'm old enough to take care of myself." But he could not hold the pose. He was afraid of his older brother. Moreover, reason was beginning to dawn upon him. He was not nearly so keen for the elopement now as he had been a moment previous.

Before he could protest further, Chester was propelling him toward the lobby of the hotel, Joe Bartlett and Harold following. The girls were left behind.

Out through the swinging door at the entrance the four hastened. Attaining the sidewalk, Chester swept the street with his eyes, but could not discern any conveyance.

At that moment "Fat" Jack McLane, the college cop, stepped out of the shadows near

the entrance to the Tate and looked at them suspiciously. Jack had been lurking there to nab the anti-Volsteadians. Recognizing Captain Trask, he stepped up to him.

"It's perfectly all right, Jack," Chester explained. "We're all sober as judges."

"I know you are," Jack grinned. "I just wanted to know if you happened to have any extra tickets to the Union State game."

"Sure," Chester replied with relief. "I'll send you two to-morrow."

"Thanks, Cap," said the policeman and returned to his post.

"My car is just around the corner," Joe Bartlett now offered in a greatly subdued voice. He felt himself largely responsible for Leonard's plight and was eager to pacify Chester.

They found Joe's car and piled into it. Harold sat beside Bartlett, who was at the wheel, and Chester and Leonard, conversing in low voices, took the rumble seat behind.

In ten minutes they were in the elaborate suite of rooms in Maury's Private Dorm occupied by Leonard, Bartlett and Don Haddon.

"I'm all right now, Chester," Leonard assured his brother shyly. "I realize what a fool I almost was. I'll see you in the morning." He held out his hand to his brother. "And—thanks. You're a peach, Chester.

You're always getting me out of trouble."

Chester shook hands with his brother. He patted the younger boy on the shoulder. Then, turning to Harold, he said crisply, "Let's go."

He looked at Harold Lamb curiously as if he were really seeing him for the first time. Here, thought Chester Trask, was surely not the foolish Freshman who had acted as Cavendish's tackling dummy, who had sat for long, dreary hours on the bench at Tate Field and was even now regarded as the joke of the squad. Why, this Freshman had brains, initiative. He was a real man.

"I'll walk over to your room with you, Lamb," Chester offered. "I need a little air —after this."

"That would be fine," said Harold, delighted and a little awed.

He walked proudly down University Street at half past two in the morning with the handsome, brawny football captain. It was a shame, he thought, that the streets were empty.

Trask was silent for a long time, and then he said with some embarrassment, "I can't begin to thank you, Lamb, for what you've done to-night. It was a fine job. You've saved my brother and me a lot of trouble. I don't doubt but what this Delphine is a perfectly nice girl for some chap. But my fam-

ily has other plans for Leonard. If he had married this girl and left college, they would have been all cut up. And he would have regretted it, and so probably would she. Leonard's just an impulsive kid. He means well and he'll acquire stability some day."

Chester seemed loathe to discuss the frustrated elopement of Leonard any further.

Instead the captain asked abruptly, "How are you getting along with football, Lamb?"

Harold faced the captain with bright, exalted eyes. "I'd give anything in the world to get into that game with Union State, Captain Trask. I *have* to get in it!"

Trask turned to him in surprise, struck with the vehemence of the Freshman's words. Was this joke player really in earnest? Chester had had one evidence that Harold Lamb was wiser, more resourceful in a pinch than one would ever have dreamed. Perhaps—

"You're as keen as that to play against State, are you?" questioned Trask.

"I'll work my head off! I'll make any sacrifice just for a chance! Then I'll show 'em!" declared Harold, clenching his fists.

Chester Trask was impressed. This Freshman certainly had the proper fighting spirit. He, Chester, owed Lamb something for what he had done to-night. By Jove—and Captain Trask made a quick, generous resolution.

"Could you come down to the field every day at one o'clock instead of two?" he suddenly asked Harold.

"Yes, my classes are over at twelve thirty."

"All right. You report to me personally dressed for practice to-morrow and every day after that at one o'clock. I'm going to do all I can to make it possible for you to get into that game against Union State."

Harold was thrilled, grateful beyond words.

"I'll be there," he cried. "I'll work my head off for you!"

"Did you ever have any quarterback experience?" asked Chester.

"That's the position I played on Sanford High School."

"Good. Your most likely chance to play against Union State is as a quarterback. We'll point you for that."

As they parted at Clark Street, the captain took the Freshman's hand. "I'm not going to try and thank you, old man. I think you understand." He pressed Harold's paw and looked his gratitude.

"I understand," said Harold, and walked down Clark Street exultantly on air.

A Harold Lloyd Corp. Production—A Pathé Picture.

TOUCHDOWN !

The Freshman.

CHAPTER XV

"I AM enclosing the check for $100 that you wrote me for," read the letter Harold received from his mother the next morning. "Harold, do you think you are doing wisely in spending this money for a dance? It doesn't sound like you. I didn't dare show your father the letter you wrote asking for the money. I knew he would raise the roof if he saw it. And I don't think Uncle Peter would approve either. We are all well here. I hope you are well too. It seems such a long time to Christmas, when you will be with us again. Your Uncle Peter is going on a trip around Thanksgiving time and says he may drop down and see you. Write whenever you have time. Dad joins me in sending you lots of love."

Harold read the epistle soberly and had to acknowledge that his mother's judgment about the foolishness of the Frolic was correct.

That same day he received the bill from the Hotel Tate. It was for $180. And there was not a single charge on it even to the broken crockery and glassware his wild flight from the ballroom had caused, that he could have rescinded. He paid the bill and was dis-

mayed to discover the low state of his finances.

Well, he argued, many a man at Tate was living on even less than he had. The lion-picture Senior, Parsons, for one. In a way, Harold congratulated himself; it was a blessing. If he had no money to spend, he would have to stay home and study. He would be able to withstand invitations such as the one for the automobile party to Lakeport.

He soon discovered that, even with money, he would have had little difficulty in declining invitations. For the invitations did not come. Dan Sheldon, deeply chagrined at the battering he had received at "Speedy's" hands, was using his tongue for backbiting. He had spread the report around that Harold Lamb was, after all, a pretty disagreeable character. What would you think of a chap who had sneaked up on his best friend and handed him a clout alongside the jaw just as the result of a little misunderstanding, eh? Of course he (Sheldon) had given Lamb a thorough licking after that first cowardly blow. That was why "Speedy" had disappeared so suddenly from the Frolic. But "Speedy" was a good fellow to stay away from. An ingrate. And, in addition to those unpleasant things, a boob. While Tatians as a whole did not bank upon the word of Dan Sheldon, still they decided that where there was so much smoke

there must be fire. They were "off" "Speedy" Lamb. He had served his purpose by being lured into the Frolic business. Now he was ripe for the discard.

Besides, the new "Speedy" proved to be not a very cheerful person to mix with from the viewpoint of that element in the Tate undergraduate body that was in college for a good time. (And that, unfortunately, was the only element that Harold had thus far been catering to.) "Speedy" became taciturn, serious-minded, careful of his money. Seemingly he spent all of his time in classroom, football field or his room. His work on his studies improved as his false popularity declined. The professors, who had been shaking their heads over him and noting him as a possible flunk-out in the Spring, began to change their minds as to his mental caliber. The more substantial section of the students, who had hitherto avoided Harold as an empty-headed braggart, began to wonder if they had not misjudged him. Men like "Shelley" Logan, who had been accustomed to greeting Harold with a curt nod, became, after observing him for two or three probationary weeks, cautiously cordial.

From another quarter also came friendly advances. Leonard Trask, meeting Harold on the way to class a couple of days after the

Frolic, came up to him and extended his hand.

"Chester told me what you did for me," said the obviously embarrassed Trask. "I want to thank you for pulling me out of a bad hole. I don't believe the guff Sheldon is saying about you. If there's anything I can ever do for you, let me know."

And Joe Bartlett, who accompanied his roommate, also shook hands and said, "Same here."

Harold visited their quarters on Hill Place once, after repeated invitations, but he resolved not to repeat the call. These aristocratic Westoverians meant well. But they were not his kind. He felt uncomfortable amid their luxurious furnishings and friends.

His adventures with the elder Trask proved much more agreeable and profitable. The football captain carried out his promise to the letter. Harold reported to him promptly at one o'clock the afternoon following the Frolic. He found Chester already in uniform, a football in his hand.

"I'm going to start you out the same as if you'd never played the game," Chester explained. "The first thing to do is to master a grasp of the fundamentals."

Chester spent the first hour of their new arrangement tossing the ball on the ground

in front of Harold and coaching the Freshman how to fall upon it. At first the attempts of the former Sanford back were almost ludicrous. He missed the ball completely several times. He struck his chin and the back of his head upon the ground. His hips and thighs were sore. But in the last fifteen minutes he flung himself at the elusive pigskin and snuggled it to his chest time and time again in the approved Cavendish manner. He even showed promise in mastering the difficult feat of not only diving at the ball and seizing it, but, also, with a quick flip of the body, rising to his feet again and starting to run. Chester Trask was an adept at this and the previous Fall had won the Union State game for Tate by such a manœuver.

The other players, assembling around two o'clock, looked curiously at their captain and his pupil. When at length the private practice had to be called off for the day on account of the arrival of Coach Cavendish and the start of the regular session, Trask commented, "You improved a lot. You'll get there. Now, if Cavendish has you receive punts or drop kicks to-day, let the ball hit the ground and fall on it as I showed you instead of catching it. I'll explain to Cavendish why you do it."

As it happened, Harold was told to receive punts that day and followed Trask's orders.

He had to stand for a number of jocular remarks from the other players for his strange tactics. Until Cavendish, looking very fierce, told one wise-cracker, "You mind your own business—see? And look out or this kid will be grabbing your job."

In his next seance with Trask, Harold spent the hour catching punts from the captain's toe. His experience of the previous day was repeated. He started off very raggedly, but, by heroic concentration, effort and attention to Trask's suggestions, showed distinct improvement at the end of the period. That Friday, the day before the Torrington game, Harold was so well pleased with himself that he thought his chances of playing against Union State looked the brightest they had to date.

Chester Trask's protégé sat on the bench during all four quarters of the game with Torrington College the next day and saw Tate walk over its lighter opponent to the tune of 19 to 0. Cavendish was not satisfied. But then, Cavendish never was. The coach declared in a loud voice that Tate's total should have been twice what it was. He was especially vehement about the mistakes of Crawford at quarterback.

"What's the matter with you, Crawford, hey?" he jawed the man who had been All-

American choice for the position the previous year and was a recognized star. "Getting a swell head? Think you've got your job cinched, hey? Well, let me tell you, young feller, that I got ten bloaters here that would have sense enough not to send a play straight into the line when they're five yards from the goal and can see the other team's tackles and guards all nicely pulled in to stop that very play.

"All you had to do was send somebody around end and you'd have caught them flat-footed. As it was, we lost the ball and seven points. And that's only one of the bones you pulled. Those All-American pickers will be giving you the icy mitt this year, old boy, if you keep that up. You want to snap out of it if you want to play on *my* little football club, Mr. All-American Crawford!"

It was the beauty of Mike Cavendish's bawling outs that he always delivered them in front of the whole assembled squad. And nobody dared smile or even look sympathetically at the man assailed, for nobody knew where the lightning would strike next. Not even Captain Trask was immune. Harold was especially interested in the coach's analysis of Crawford's shortcomings. For was not he the man for whose position Trask was grooming his private pupil?

But if Harold had ever entertained any hopes of giving Crawford a run for his job, they sank during the following week. For Crawford, smarting under Cavendish's reproof, was like a man inspired. He ran wild through the scrubs and directed the varsity eleven like the genius he was. And in the game against McLeod the next Saturday he scored three touch-downs single-handed and won a grudging compliment from his coach in the locker room afterward.

"It does the boys good to get smacked in their vanity once in a while," commented Mike Cavendish sardonically to Trask.

Crisp November had succeeded sultry October and the season of more important games for the Tate eleven was at hand. Coach Cavendish signalized the arrival of this more crucial period by protesting to Captain Trask regarding the extra hour of practice he was putting in every day.

"I don't want you going stale on me," declared the coach.

"Don't worry about my condition, Mike," said Trask. "I'll watch it. I won't do anything that will hurt me. But please don't ask me to drop these workouts with Lamb. I've a special reason for wanting to keep them up."

"You don't expect to make anything out of

that fool Freshman, do you?" Cavendish snorted.

"I don't know about that. You'd be surprised how he's coming along. Stick him in a scrimmage soon as a favor to me, will you, Mike, and see what he does? Even if he wasn't getting along so well, I'd want to keep the one o'clock stuff up. I've another reason."

"Is he some relation of yours?" asked Cavendish curiously.

"No. Nothing like that. It's a very special reason."

"Oh, all right," conceded the coach. "Use your own judgment. What position is he supposed to be out for?"

"Quarterback."

"Going to grab Crawford's job, is he?" grinned Mike.

"Maybe—some day."

Tate journeyed to Massachusetts the following Saturday to meet Dahlgren Tech in the first crucial game of the season. A loyal band of some five hundred rooters chartered a Sound liner and made merry on the way to the game till the wee sma' hours of the morning. They made even merrier on the way back, for Tate trounced the strong Dahlgren team 14 to 3. Harold did not even occupy his familiar seat on the bench during this

game. He was not invited to accompany the team. The erstwhile "'Speedy' the Spender" did not feel that he could afford the expense of the trip by boat.

The Tate players, assembling at the field the Monday following the game, could not conceal the jubilance they felt over their victory. Despite a rather rough encounter and the relative lightness of the Tatians, the locals had come through the struggle virtually without a scratch. Yet Mike Cavendish was worried.

"I almost wish they had walloped us," he confided to Trask. "Analyze those two touchdowns of ours and you can see they were both largely luck. Their field goal, on the other hand, was the result of good, hard, consistent line bucking. If we hadn't braced and held them for that one down, they'd have probably put it over for a touchdown. Besides, did you see what Union State did to them last week? 20 to 9. And Union State earned their points, while Dahlgren just happened to luck out a fluke safety and caught a wild forward pass for a freak run in the last minute of play. It don't look so good, Cap. And now these bozos will probably all get overconfident and start loafing on the job. No, sir—I, for one, don't feel like giving three cheers."

He showed his uneasiness by delivering a tart lecture on Tate's shortcomings in what he called "that lucky win at Dahlgren," then keeping the entire first team out of scrimmage for the first three days of the week. While his real purpose in this was to prevent staleness in his star men, he intimated that he was doing it in the effort to see if some of the second and third string players did not deserve places on the varsity. And Harold, continuing to sit on the bench and do the menial jobs around the field, was not allowed in a single one of these minor scrimmages. When Wednesday night came and he knew the first team was to monopolize the field for the rest of the week, it took all of Harold's deep well of inspiration to keep his courage up to its wonted high pitch.

Well, there was still time to show them! There would always be time up until the last whistle blew in the Union State game!

The next Saturday Tate trimmed a fast team from Hazelton College with a very deceptive open formation and forward passing game, 21 to 7. Cavendish sent the entire second eleven in at the beginning of the second half. Hazelton scored their touchdown on the substitutes.

The next week was a more severe test.

Western College, one of the big Conference teams, sporting a line composed of tough, corn-fed two hundred-pounders and a backfield of huskies that drove through like locomotives, hit the Tate Stadium. Tate had to play real football and realized it from the start. In the first five minutes of play, Western ripped the Tate line to shreds and Cavendish was obliged to rush his first string backfield into the game immediately to support the tottering tackles and guards. Trask, Blythe and Houghton did yeomen service during that hectic first half, with the Tatians in the grandstand alternately cheering their heads off and holding their breath in fear. Once the huge red-headed Western fullback plowed right through the Tate center and had a clear field for a touchdown, except for Crawford hovering half way to the goal line. When the hastily formed Western interference took Crawford neatly out, the Tate rooters gave all up for lost, till Chester Trask, coming down the field like a hundred-yard man, dived through the air at the red-head and brought him to earth five yards from the last chalk mark. Then miraculously Tate's line held, and the half ended 0-0.

Cavendish read the riot act between the halves. He tongue-lashed the linemen until they were ready to go out and stop the Twen-

tieth Century Limited with their bare chests, if necessary. They were like new and inspired men during the second half. Moreover, the Western backfield having extended a prodigious effort in the first part of the game, were tired.

Tate, holding their opponents, secured possession of the ball. The "Big Four" got under way. Crawford, always especially good in a tight game, manipulated the Tate backs like a master. The home team punched over for a touchdown and the game ended 6-0.

It developed that Crawford's work was all the more remarkable because he had been playing the entire second half with a wrenched ankle, sustained when he was violently set upon by three Western interferers on the occasion of the red-headed fullback's sensational run. The Tate line came out of the game in a battered condition also. Cavendish took everybody who had played in the game to Lakeport for a rest over the week-end. They were a sober lot. Having met their only opponent of the season that shaped up anywhere near the strength of Union State, the Tate warriors had exhibited a sievelike line, a backfield that had only been able to get going in the last fifteen minutes of play and a general sloppiness that did not augur at all well. While the Tate hordes snake-danced and re-

joiced on the field over the great victory, Mike Cavendish was devising means of making a real football team out of the victors.

There remained on the Tate schedule only two games: Douglas and Union State. Douglas was traditionally a weak team and was annually given the Saturday before the final great game with Union State to give the varsity players a breathing spell and the scrubs a taste of actual combat.

Returning from Lakeport on Tuesday, Cavendish rested his regulars for the remainder of the week, permitting Crawford and the other injured men to stay away from the field altogether. The failure of Crawford's swollen ankle to respond to Hughie Mulligan's treatment was a real worry to Cavendish. Crawford was the brains and mainspring of the Tate attack. With him out of the Union State game, Cavendish hated to think what would happen. He forced the star quarterback to forsake the ministrations of Mulligan and take to a cot in the college infirmary, with instructions to the doctor there to bring that bad ankle around into shape at any cost.

Then Cavendish set furiously to work developing his substitute quarterbacks into Crawford caliber, in case of an emergency. He scrimmaged the second and third teams,

changing quarterbacks every ten minutes. He had "Dusty" Rhoades bring over all his quarterback material from his Freshman class team. Tate field swarmed with signal-callers. Cavendish saw only one possible successor to Crawford in the lot. A blond haired Senior named Tichenor who had been playing understudy for the injured man for the past three years. Tichenor was a good mechanical quarterback. He ran the team well, could catch punts and was a good tackler. But he lacked Crawford's fire and inspiration, Crawford's knack of making a tired team suddenly brace and play its head off, Crawford's uncanny ability to diagnose the opposition and trick it, Crawford's leaping start after catching a punt and his lethal straight-arm. There was only one Crawford. Just as there was only one Chester Trask.

On Friday, Cavendish shook his head and said sadly to Trask, "Quarterbacks ain't made; they're born."

"You've given everybody else a show. Why not try my Freshman?" suddenly asked Trask.

"Who—the demon Lamb?" said Cavendish. "Don't make me laugh, Cap."

"Well, there's only five minutes of practice left. Why not please the kid by letting him in."

The coach grunted. Then he countered

slowly, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll stick this fool kid in and show you how bad he really is. I'll give him some rope and let him hang himself. Tell him to take the place of that muttonhead that just gummed the play for the third team."

Trask, watching with Cavendish from the side lines the scrimmage between the second and third elevens, walked over to the bench-warming Harold and said crisply, "Jump out there in Bell's place."

Harold looked actually frightened. "You mean—" he started to stammer.

"Yes. Snap into it." The Freshman had peeled off his sweater and had started on a dead run for the struggling scrimmagers when Trask called him sharply back. "You don't know the signals, do you?" said Trask. "Well, listen sharp then. Two plays will be enough for you to try." And he rapidly revealed two sets of the varsity's mystic rush numbers. Then Trask resumed his place beside Cavendish.

The third team was about to put the ball into play as Harold rushed up to the assistant coach acting as referee and reported breathlessly, "Substitute for Bell," as he had heard so many others announce themselves. The referee blew the whistle just in time. Harold took the headguard of the banished

Bell amid the curious but silent faces of the perspiring players and stooped behind the center. He wished now that he had waited longer to digest the signals given him by Trask. Somehow they did not seem so clear out here.

"7—25—4—5," he barked in a good imitation of Crawford. He took the ball cleanly from the snapperback. The opposing lines clashed. The third team backfield drove toward the line. Harold turned to plant the ball safely in the abdomen of his right halfback. But no halfback appeared. Instead, the second team's right tackle, catapulting through the line, tackled Harold fiercely and nailed him to the spot. As the Freshman arose he knew that he had done something wrong. The third string left halfback quickly confirmed this.

"Where was the ball?" that muddy-faced worthy shouted with unnecessary loudness.

"Why—that wasn't your signal. It was the other—"

"It wasn't! Why don't you learn the signals before you come out here losing the ball for us? We could have had a touchdown, too. Only two yards to gain to make first down. It's a shame! You play in back of the line there now. I'll lay back for punts."

Chastened, Harold obeyed. He danced

around behind his own left tackle while the second team quarterback hurled two useless plunges into the line. A third plunge was sent directly toward Harold's position. There was a sharp thud of canvas and human flesh meeting. Brief milling around. Then suddenly a sharp cry. A fumble. And, taking a freak bound, the ball shot clear of the mêlée and out upon the cinder track bordering the field. Harold, the only man free, tore after the pigskin, dived at it, hugged it, and, executing perfectly the famous Trask recovery, was on his feet and on his way down the field. The referee's whistle shrilled. But Harold did not even slow up. He stopped only when Mike Cavendish's husky form, arms raised aloft menacingly, halted him.

"Where do you get that stuff—running with an out-of-bounds ball?" shouted Cavendish.

"Why—I—" started Harold, blood trickling slowly down from a cut or two where the cinders had pierced his skin.

"Oh, go along into the locker room," said Mike impatiently. He turned and blew his whistle. The practice was over for the day.

Cavendish turned to Chester Trask and said sadly, "You see—once a boob, always a boob."

"Oh, he didn't do so badly," defended Chester. "I only gave him the signals a minute before he went in. He had no chance to

learn them. And you've got to admit he picked that ball up nicely. And there were no linesmen there to let him know the track was out of bounds."

"I'd sooner put 'Blind Pete' in the game than that fool Freshman," insisted sour Mike Cavendish.

As for Harold, under the shower in the locker room he felt like drowning himself. His only chance of the season, and he had muffed it!

The next afternoon Douglas College gave Tate the scare of their lives. Coming to the Stadium with a team heavily padded with "ringers" and determined to win by hook or crook, this small two-building college treated Mike Cavendish to one of the worst hours of his life. The Tate line was again weak. The backs were sluggish, Tichenor, at quarterback, failed to strike any spark in his ball-carriers. Only in the last quarter did the superior Tate coaching tell. Then Blythe and Trask went over for a touchdown apiece. The final score was Tate 13, Douglas 0. Velie, end, and Woolsey, tackle, came out of the game limping badly, to add to Mike's woes. With neither of the varsity guards able to even start the game, owing to injuries received in the Western game, this brought the Tate casualty list up to five. This included Crawford, who

watched the game in civilian clothes from the bench beside Harold. However, the infirmary doctor had assured Cavendish that morning that his star quarterback, barring unexpected setbacks, would be able to start in the Union State struggle.

And so, the following Monday, began the final preparations at Tate Field for the biggest event of the Fall season, the Tate-Union State game.

CHAPTER XVI

THE sign "No Admittance" was nailed to the entrance of Tate Field during that last tense week. Mike Cavendish went to work in grim earnest with his charges. Cavendish's scouts reported from Stateville, seat of Union State University, that Tate's rivals had a fast, well coached team that would outweigh Captain Trask's eleven an average of ten pounds to a man. Moreover, Union State that season had acquired a reputation for hard, rough tactics and, learning of the delicate condition of certain stars of the Red and White, were avowedly out to "get" them. Ordinarily Cavendish would have loved a rough-and-tumble match. But now he glanced at Crawford, in uniform but limping, and at his other injured key men and sighed.

He scrimmaged his varsity team with the scrubs Tuesday, with Crawford calling signals for the first eleven and Tichenor for the second. There was a lighter scrimmage on Wednesday afternoon and one of only ten minutes on Thursday. But the latter mêlée was just two minutes too long. Tichenor, carrying the ball on a short plunge through tackle, was downed hard and came up with a

drawn face and a peculiarly limp looking shoulder. He tried to sneak back behind his burly center without Cavendish seeing him. But Mike was wise. He came trotting up.

"Let's see that shoulder, Tichenor," he barked. And, turning, "Mulligan! Mulligan!!"

The trainer kneaded the bruised member with sensitive fingers. "It ain't broke; but it's a pretty bad sprain," announced Mulligan to the coach.

"Gee," said Cavendish. "It's a tough year on quarterbacks. You're through for the day, Tichenor. Let Hughie bandage that shoulder for you and, for the love of Mike, take care of it." He turned toward the bench and looked over the occupants. "Hollister," he yelled. "Take Tichenor's place here."

Harold settled back in his seat again. He had been certain it would be Hollister, but he had leaned forward to catch the coach's eye anyway. He was sorry for Tichenor, of course. But the fact remained that there were only four quarterbacks on the field—Crawford, Tichenor, Hollister and—Lamb. Of these, the first two were now in a brittle condition.

As if to confirm Harold's optimistic calculations, Chester Trask gave him a copy of the

special set of signals that were to be used by the men who played in the game with Union State.

"You go to work and learn these signals letter perfect," said the Captain impersonally. "Crawford will probably be fit to play the whole game Saturday, but you never can tell. It won't do you any harm to get these signals down cold. I don't have to caution you about being mighty careful of that paper."

The action of Trask in giving him the signals for the Union State game meant a lot, as Harold explained to Peggy on the Sayre porch that evening. Everybody on the squad hadn't received them. They were reserved for just the men who would probably play in the big contest. Harold was elated, and Peggy encouraged him.

"Just let 'em give me a show in that game and I'll prove what 'Speedy' Lamb really can do," declared Harold.

"You bet you will," echoed Peggy.

In a few minutes he arose.

"I've got to go upstairs now and study these signals," he told her. The signals were on his mind.

"I just know I'm going to hear you calling them out there on Saturday," said Peggy optimistically.

"Say, those are pretty good seats they

handed me for you and your mother, aren't they?" Harold asked.

"Right in the center of the field. I'll be watching you every minute."

Friday afternoon Cavendish took his charges across the street from the practice field over to the great Tate Stadium, where the game was to be played. He wanted to accustom them to the turf and air currents. Large piles of straw were banked along the sides of the field, ready to be spread as soon as the practice was over to guard against rain. The huge tiers of seats looming upward from the horseshoe-shaped arena seemed miles high. Harold, catching punts with the other quarterbacks near the north goal, cast a hurried eye around and could not believe that to-morrow this vast wilderness of concrete and timber would be filled with people.

Then the strains of a jaunty band came from in back of the walls. Harold's head turned in the direction of the music. But he jerked back to attention again as Cavendish's barking voice shouted, "Lamb! Snap into it, man. Take quarter on the scrubs for a while."

Harold trotted obediently over. With Cavendish glowering not five feet from his elbow, he ran the second team through a short signal practice. He was engaged thus when the Tate Band, in gay red sweaters, red caps and creamy

white flannel trousers, came swinging in the lower gate of the Stadium at the head of fifteen hundred Tatians singing "Tate Forever More." The practice ceased for a while as the band wheeled around the field and its followers scrambled up to seats in the stands. The leader, straight and chesty, twirled his shiny baton and it flashed in the sun. He gave a signal. The band executed a neat maneuver and formed a giant "T." The students in the stands cheered. Then the band, too, sought seats in the grandstand. White-flanneled cheer leaders leaped in front of the first row of Tatians, flashed their megaphones, waved their arms and fifteen hundred throats burst into:

Brack ko-ak, brack ko-ak,
Whee-e-e-e, wham;
Chop suey, chop suey;
Tate! Tate! Ta-a-ate!!

Harold might have been reminded of the first time he had listened to that yell, from his own lips in front of the mirror in his Sanford bedroom. And it is a certainty that he would not now have wished to change places with the leaping cheer leaders. But, truth to tell, Harold did not even hear the Tate battle cry. He was concentrating so intensely upon directing the scrub eleven faultlessly through

their last signal practice under the watchful eye of Mike Cavendish.

"That's all," said Mike shortly. "Lamb and Childers, come here." Harold and the big scrub fullback walked over to the coach. "Childers, go down the field fifty yards and take this kick. Run it back. Lamb, you tackle him."

Harold understood at once. The coach, never having seen this ex-joke Freshman in scrimmage, was having a last-minute try-out. From behind Cavendish, Harold could catch the anxious eye of Chester Trask. Harold gritted his teeth, braced himself and faced the heavy, bullet-like Childers, the man who was spoken of as Trask's logical successor at varsity fullback. Cavendish, with an ease and proficiency that was a credit to him, punted the ball. Childers took it nicely on the fly and started up the field like a rifle shot. Nearing Harold, he cut sharply to the right. But the Freshman was not to be denied. All the weeks of Trask's coaching were telling him how to handle himself. He darted after Childers, neared him, dived under the fullback's vicious straight-arm and felled him cleanly and finally.

Cavendish and Trask exchanged a significant glance.

"Don't mean a thing," Cavendish snorted

softly. "Anybody can tackle with a set-up like that. A game's different."

In the stands the loyal Tatians were cheering each member of the varsity separately, ending with a wild burst of enthusiasm for Chester Trask. All the players on the field were now idle except the first eleven, which was grimly going through their final signal practice. Crawford, a huge white bandage binding his right ankle tightly, was calling the numbers. Many an anxious Tate eye observed that the star's limp was scarcely perceptible, and rejoiced. Velie and Woolsey, the injured linemen, hobbled slightly, but were seemingly as pepful as ever. The Tate casualty list had apparently rounded into shape. The students wondered if the New York papers, commenting on the approaching gridiron classic, were not right in saying that reports of injuries at Tate were just a part of foxy Mike Cavendish's fake pessimism and designed to breed overconfidence at Union State. Where the Tatians, however, did *not* believe the papers was in the sporting writers' predictions that, on the face of their comparative records, Union State ought to win the game.

There were more cheers and songs from the grandstand. Then the rooters, having completed their annual last-minute demonstration

for their football warriors, formed on the field behind their band and marched back to the campus singing "Tate, Forward March to Victory." Harold, sitting on the bench on the side lines, suddenly became aware that the malevolent eyes of Dan Sheldon, sauntering beside Garrity on the outside edge of the parade, were upon him.

"How's the water boy to-day?" Dan yelled to the Freshman and, nudging Garrity, pointed out the fourth-string varsity quarterback with a laughing sneer.

Harold's face reddened and his fists clenched. He would like to have rushed out and hit that dark, snaky face once more. But he subsided and contented himself with waving back an acknowledgment of greetings from Joe Bartlett and Leonard Trask, marching side by side among the Tate hordes.

"Atta boy, Lamb," shouted Joe.

"Go get 'em, Lamb," echoed Leonard.

Harold sat alone amid the mob that jammed the Tate auditorium that evening at the final mass meeting of the season. On the stage were the members of the varsity eleven in civilian clothes, along with the team manager, Coach Cavendish and "Cupid" Williams, Tate's most famous football rooter. Williams, who weighed nearly three hundred pounds, had been a star gridiron player at

Tate around 1902. Though now a wealthy steel man, he had preserved his love for football and his college and followed the Tate elevens year after year with all the youthful enthusiasm of an undergraduate. He saw every game, spent many days of his valuable time assisting the coaches, always passed the final week of the season at Tate and was annually a center of attraction at the last mass meeting. Williams's interest in Tate football yearly took a more material form in the presentation of a brand new and latest model headguard to each member of the varsity eleven on the eve of the Union State game. A heap of these harnesses was now piled in back of Williams's extra-size chair.

Aside from the football men, the auditorium stage also held the leader of the glee club, who doubled as head cheer master, and his assistant cheer leaders. Below, in the orchestra pit, were massed the Tate Band. The glee club leader led cheers and the building rocked with hoarse youthful voices. The band played Tate songs and the rafters trembled anew.

Then "Cupid" Williams wheezed heavily to his feet. There was a new wave of enthusiasm.

"That's the stuff that wins for Tate," shouted Williams. "Don't think these foot-

ball lads up here don't appreciate, because they do. If you're with them—and I can see you are—they'll wallop Union State to-morrow to a frazzle! (Roars of approval.) Mickey Cavendish will get up later and tell you it's going to be tough and all that. But don't believe him. It's the bunk! To-morrow is Tate's day and no power on earth can change that! (Hysterics from the audience.) Now, somebody once told me that it helped football players to keep their heads up if they had something nice and new to keep them up in. So, ever since, I've been bringing around these new headguards at about this time. And it's always worked! (Cries of "You bet it has!" and "Atta boy, 'Cupid'!") Without any further bull then, I'll present the first headguard to the man every Union State gets heart failure over if you so much as mention his name—Captain Trask!"

The cheer master sprang to his feet. "Long cheer for Captain Trask!" he barked. Harold yelled himself red in the face with the rest of the undergraduate body.

Trask set an example for the rest of the team by thanking Williams for the present, shaking hands with him and not making a speech. Next came Crawford, and he got nearly as big a hand as the captain. And so on down the line to big Mershon, the center.

Then Coach Cavendish was announced. Harold was surprised at the subdued appearance the fiery-tongued football mentor made in his unaccustomed white collar and long trousers. Mike, the Freshman guessed correctly, would have felt much more at home in his usual faded blue sweater and tattered moleskins. Cavendish stepped hesitantly to the front of the platform, amid cheers.

"If you fellows are counting on betting money on Tate—don't!" began the coach, subduing his husky voice until it was an almost inaudible rasp. "These Union State lads are there—and don't you forget it for a minute. And, in spite of the New York papers saying it's the bunk, we have a lot of men in pretty bad shape. But I'll say this for them: They'll all be out there with their heads up, fighting. You can bank on that." He turned and swept the team with the fighting eyes they knew so well. Then he sat down. And there were more cheers. They stopped as Cavendish rose again and said in a louder voice, "I forgot to say that the varsity team is now going home and go to bed. And I want every member of the squad that has been ordered to report in uniform at the Stadium to-morrow to go home and go to bed too. I want fresh, snappy people to work with out there. Don't forget that!"

Harold was among those who followed as the team filed down off the stage and out of the building through the aisles of shouting students. He could hear the army left in the auditorium still singing "Tate Forever More" as he walked down University Street. Already the football crowds were pouring into town. The sidewalks were unusually animated for a Friday night. The entrance to the brightly lighted Hotel Tate was blocked with people, and in the lobby he could see swarms. Peggy would be very busy to-night and to-morrow, though she had secured time off to go to the game with her mother and use the two tickets Harold had presented to her. Peggy was prettier than any of the pretty girls laughing and chatting with their escorts in the crisp November night of University Street. Harold was quite sure of that.

As he made his way through a group of people on the sidewalk in front of the Tate, a man suddenly detached himself from the rest and caught Harold by the sleeve.

"You're Harold Lamb, aren't you?" asked a voice somehow familiar. Harold looked up into the face of Walter Coburn, Jr., son of the Sanford banker. But he had to look twice to make sure. The eyes and skin of young Coburn were so much clearer than they had been on the occasion of their last meeting.

His posture had straightened. He looked much more like a real man.

They shook hands in friendly fashion, and Walter, taking the arm of the smiling blonde woman beside him, introduced her as his wife. She too had changed. The ex-burlesque queen was dressed modestly and had nearly all the refined appeal of any of the débutantes or students' sisters around her.

In answer to Harold's friendly inquiries, Walter divulged that he was selling bonds in New York and that his wife had a small rôle in a Theater Guild production.

"No more white lights for us," laughed Walter, and he looked at his wife proudly. "We've settled down into a respectable, hard-working married couple. It's all Ruth's fault. Dad had her all wrong, you see. When he shut down on the dough, she stuck out her chin and said we'd make good in spite of him. And we have. And he's come around too. He's invited us out to Sanford for Christmas. That'll be our second outing since our marriage. This is the first."

The Sanfordians parted, agreeing to look each other up at Christmas time. Harold was thoughtful as he walked down University Street and turned into Clark. What changes in Walter in just a couple of months! Well, for that matter, what changes in himself!

How complete the development was in his case, and whether it was for better or worse would be revealed on the morrow, he grimly told himself—if he got his chance.

Ten minutes later, he was sitting, in his pajamas, on the side of his bed studying for the hundredth time the precious slip of paper that bore the Tate signals. The numbers were running through his brain as he slipped under the covers. It was an hour and a half before he could coax himself to sleep.

CHAPTER XVII

Brack ko-ak, brack ko-ak,
Whee-e-e-e, wham;
Chop suey, chop suey;
Tate! Tate! Tate!

THE shrill war cry, flung into the autumn air by thirty thousand loyal Tate throats, thundered across the gridiron streaked by the afternoon shadows.

But this time the cry did not ring out just in the imagination of a college-struck country youth posturing in front of his bedroom mirror.

It was the day of days! When every heart in Tate stood still and all the world watched football history in the making.

The tocsin surged like a barrage of artillery before the first wave of attack goes over the top. It surged from a solid, brightly hued mass of humanity banked fifty tiers high in the Tate Stadium. Excited youths, pretty girls, sedate matrons ready to turn their heads away in horror at injuries down on that lime-marked field, white-haired old grads, sports and actors from Broadway, gamblers and the great non-collegiate but sport-loving mass of the American people. And, over in the oppo-

site stand, where were encamped the hosts of Union State, a similar assemblage. High on the topmost tier of seats on the Tate side of the field, in the exact center, telegraph instruments clicked and blasé newspaper reporters bent over copy paper, ready to fling the results of each move on the field to the four corners of the earth. And, near them, a radio microphone and its genii were already telling thousands about the crucial doings in Tate Stadium that crisp November afternoon.

Following the Tate cheer, a great silence reigned in the amphitheater.

In the center of the field a thin dime spun flashingly into the sun and dropped to the turf.

"Tails," Chester Trask had said quietly as the coin was in mid-course.

A little man in white shirt and trim knickerbockers stooped over the dime, flipped it into his palm and said, "Tails she is."

"We'll defend the south goal," said Captain Trask. The referee pocketed his money and tossed the new brown football under his arm to Trask, who in turn tossed it to his substitute, Childers, and ran off the field.

Captain McCoy, of Union State, trotted back briskly to his men. "Line up, fellows. We receive," he cried to them.

Big Childers hovered over the ball care-

fully on his own forty-yard line while the Tate men ranged in a single line on either side of him. Having teed the ball to his satisfaction, Childers stepped back. The Tate players, prancing to keep warm and to allay their nervousness, settled down and crouched in their positions.

"All ready, Union State?" called the referee in a silence that would have made a cap pistol sound like Big Bertha.

McCoy, the Union State center, flung up his hand in affirmation.

"All ready, Tate?"

Childers signaled his O. K.

A whistle shrilled. Mike Cavendish, on the bench near Harold Lamb, exhaled voluminously. His annual big moment had arrived.

Childers swung toward the ball, increased his stride, hit it strong and true with his big boot. The Tatians were down the field under the kick like a pack of hounds. Tobey, the Union State halfback, and a fast, rugged runner, too, took the ball on the fly. His interference formed quickly. Broad blue chests ranged thick and fast in front of him. The first Tate tacklers were bowled over. Tobey, running with a peculiar bent-over hitching stride that was desperately hard to fathom, streaked up the field. Then, just in time to

save Mike Cavendish from apoplexy, Velie, the Tate left end, cut back of the interference and nailed the runner. Tobey had carried the ball back thirty-five yards and the Union State stand was a riot of enthusiasm.

On the bench, Tate's "Big Four" backfield, whom Cavendish always kept out of the first quarter, were hovering around their coach. "Watch this man Tobey," Cavendish said hoarsely. "He's a devil in an open field. Trask, he's your man when you get in there. Don't let him get started. Hey—hey!" Cavendish had stopped his bench coaching abruptly as catastrophe greeted Tate on the field.

Union State had formed quickly. With the Tate line off balance, the ball had been snapped on a direct pass to Wing, the fullback. He held it back of him, seemingly to throw a forward pass, and the confused Tatians instinctively waited for the toss. But even as Wing posed with the ball, the fleet Tobey, coming like a blue tornado, snatched it out of his hand and whirled around left end. Tate was caught napping. There were a few futile stabs at Tobey, but in a second he was out in a clear field, except for Tichenor, the quarterback, forty yards beyond the line of scrimmage. The Union State stands were on their feet yelling, screaming. A

touchdown on the first play of the game? Verily the gods were good.

Tichenor warily swung over to meet the flying enemy. Pale, grim, teeth clenched. Tobey shot straight toward him, a blue streak of lightning, as if to bore through Tichenor. Then, in the last few yards between them the Union State star swerved sharply to the left. But Tichenor was not fooled. He swerved too. He dived, under the deadly straight-arm, cleanly at the elusive knees of Tobey and felled him to the earth.

"Thank God," breathed Mike Cavendish, who had sat open-mouthed. Then he was full of ire. "The dumbheads!" he cried. "Fooled by a trick play that's got whiskers on it. It's a crime."

But his anger changed to concern as he saw the Tate team, puffing and humiliated, standing over a fallen man. Tobey's plunging knees had struck Tichenor's bad shoulder. Childers pulled the substitute quarterback to his feet and Tichenor wanted to trot back to his position. But Childers, acting captain, was shaking his head, pointing to the game signal-caller's unmistakably displaced shoulder and looking over to Cavendish to indicate that Tichenor must come out.

"Well, if that ain't a tough break," sighed Mike. He looked at the "Big Four" and

waved his hand. "Go on in, you fellows, and see if you can't break up this Donnybrook Fair!" Mike was sending his prides into the conflict after only one play in the game had been completed. Union State took it as an omen.

The Tate second-string backfield came trotting out, except for Tichenor and his human crutch, Childers, who walked slowly. Hughie Mulligan quickly felt Tichenor's shoulder. He shook his head. "He's through," he said to Cavendish. "He ought to go down to the infirmary right away and get that set."

"Go ahead," said the coach gloomily. He was watching Wing, of Union State, hit the center of the Tate line for five yards.

"Look at that line of theirs," Mike groaned to nobody in particular. "They make our lads look like lightweights. Where do they dig up that material? Oh, we've got our work cut out for us to-day all right, all right."

Gales, the Union State left halfback, followed with a plunge off left tackle. His lineman opened a gap as big as a barn door through Woolsey, the opposing Tate man. Velie, Woolsey's supporting end, was taken neatly out of the play. But Gales got only two yards beyond the line of scrimmage. Chester Trask, catapulting into the breach,

A Harold Lloyd Corp. Production—A Pathé Picture.

The Freshman.

THE HERO RECEIVES HIS REWARD.

killed his advance before it had hardly started. But time out was called. Woolsey and Velie, two of Tate's cripples of the past two weeks, were both hurt. Woolsey so badly that he had to be removed from the game.

"What have those bozos got?—brass knuckles and two-inch spikes? Or have I put a lot of glass men out there, hey?" complained Cavendish as he sent in a substitute for Woolsey.

Union State was stopped only temporarily. On the next play Tobey made it first down around Velie's end. It was easy to be seen that the Tate end was not himself. He was limping badly and seemingly in pain. His old injury had returned to plague him. With Tobey running wild, Cavendish could not afford to take chances. He called Velie out of the game.

The Union State procession continued straight toward the Tate goal line. Short jabs at the line, each time with a small gain. Five- and ten-yard runs around end by the slippery Tobey. The visitors' heavy linemen were simply too bulky for the lighter Tatians. Moreover, Union State was playing as roughly as the law allowed and, when they could get away with it, rougher. The referee warned them about piling on when the ball was down, about illegal use of knees, about

cutting down men from behind who were out of the play. He checked their advance by penalizing them twenty yards for holding after a Tate guard had nearly pulled Trask's arm out of its socket.

But the Union State advance was inexorably resumed. The Tate linemen responded to Trask's slaps on the backs and entreaties. They sweated, tugged, dived into the play, grabbed and accepted the terrible battering they got without a murmur. The opposition was simply too much for them. Only the heroic work of the "Big Four," supporting them, saved Tate from a rout.

At their own fifteen yard line, Tate put on a last stand and held the Blue for three downs, to the wild delight of the home rooters. But a new menace loomed immediately. Swanson, Union State's right tackle and the year's best drop kicker, fell back for a try at goal. It looked to be an easy kick for this expert. Only twenty-five yards to the goal posts!

"Block that kick! Block that kick!" shrilled the entreaty from the Tate stands.

The ball was passed. A surge of bodies. Straight and true came the pigskin to big Swanson, who dropped it to the ground and booted it cleanly. Cavendish and the rest of the Tate bench held their breaths. The ball sailed close to the left goal post. But the

referee, standing alertly behind the line, was signaling—no goal!

And the first quarter was over.

The cheer leaders, as if sprung from catapults, jumped into action. Shrill challenges were flung back and forth across the field from the rival camps. Down there on the grass the players of the two teams soused their hot, smeared faces into water buckets and then clustered around their respective leaders.

"Not so good, eh, Mike?" "Cupid" Williams, blessed with a bench pass, came up to the coach and said.

"I'll be lucky to have enough men to finish the game with," groaned Mike.

"Well, Crawford's holding up all right. That's something to be thankful for," said Williams.

"He ain't had nothing to do yet," gloomed Mike. "Wait till he gets scrimmaging with that glass ankle of his."

For the good of Old Tate, Harold Lamb, tense and listening, hoped that Crawford's "glass ankle" would hold out. Tichenor was gone, and the Freshman realized the gap between Crawford and quarterbacks such as Hollister, sitting there beside him looking already scared to death, and himself. Harold honestly wished Crawford would stick it out the whole game.

The familiar whistle blew again and play was resumed. Tate now defended the north goal, with a little wind at their backs. Trask, standing on his own twenty-yard line, booted a beautiful spiral fifty yards down the field. But half of the value of the long kick was nullified, for Tobey ran the punt back twenty-five yards. Then the Union State march started anew. The Tate linemen were tired. Crew and Waterman, the guards, who had been standing a terrific amount of leg-twisting and other illegalities from their brutal opponents and were outweighed by them fifteen pounds to a man, staggered around almost groggy. Only the double duty stood by big Mershon, the Tate center, an iron man, kept the center of the Tate line from becoming a sieve.

Union State battered their way to Tate's twenty-yard line, but were held for two downs. Then the vistor's quarterback, sensing that the half was nearly over, called upon Swanson again. This time the star drop kicker made good, sending a beautiful effort straight between the goal posts. Concentrated hysteria attacked the Union State stands. Tate was silent. The figure "3" went up opposite the visitors' column on the automatic scoreboard. Before the teams could line up again, the whistle blew to denote the end of the first half.

Tate had had possession of the ball exactly three times. They had rushed it exactly thrice, gaining six yards. Then they had each time been forced to punt, being too far in their own territory to risk further offensive.

No wonder the Union State hosts were jubilant as they sang their songs and stood up to stretch and visited between the halves. The Tate songs were just as loud, but they lacked that spirit of defiance. The Union State Band paraded on the field and formed a "T" in front of the Tate stands. The Tate Band returned the compliment with a slightly ragged "U. S." for the visitors. All the traditional between-the-halves ceremonies were carried out.

Meanwhile, in the Tate field house, Mike Cavendish was exhorting his young and failing charges. Mike professed to believe that beating Union State was a cinch, that the Tate eleven had been lying down on the job and ought to be ashamed of itself. The beleaguered Tate linemen, nursing bruised thighs, black eyes and cut faces, stretched out panting on benches and took Mike's tongue-lashing.

"What of it if they're heavier than you are?" roared Mike. "Beef don't count. It's nerve. And you fellows aren't showing the nerve. Trask is the only one that's playing the game. You can block that big bloke

Wing. You can nail this Tobey. But you let 'em suck you in, fool you. You act like schoolboys playing your first game." And so on to the extent of ten minutes.

Harold, listening to every word, was filled with a mad longing to get out there and show them what Cavendish meant. His fists clenched. If Cavendish would only let him in there—he'd stop Wing; he'd nail Tobey; he'd get hold of that ball and then rush the feet off those big Blue giants! He trotted out with the team and took his place on the bench beside Hollister.

The teams lined up again. This time Union State, fresh and inspired by their score, kicked off to Tate. McCoy sent a long, lazy spiral into the hands of Crawford. The latter, catching it with that easy grace for which he was famous, was off fleet as a deer. But the huge Union State advance guard tore through the Tate interference as if it were paper. Two husky Blue shirts hit Crawford at the same time. He went down like a shot. Out of the sharp contact three bodies hitting at full force came a queer little click. Cavendish groaned aloud. Rightly. For, though Crawford had clung to the ball, his weak ankle had not survived the rough handling of his tacklers. When the Union Staters rose, Crawford was stretched at full length

on the ground, one leg twisted under him. He tried to stand, slumped down again with a little cry of pain.

Harold had turned to Dave Hollister at the beginning of that memorable second half and remarked cheerfully, "There's only two of us left here, Dave, old boy! We'll get into this game yet."

Now, with Crawford injured, Harold's words seemed almost prophetic.

As the Tate players crowded around the recumbent Crawford, Hugh Mulligan ran out on the field with his medicine kit. Cavendish, securing the permission of the referee, followed him into the arena.

Harold, looking anxiously out upon the field, suddenly saw Trask waving to him. Springing up, wild with excitement, the Freshman yet took time to say consolingly to Dave Hollister, "Hard luck, Dave, they're sending me in ahead of you!"

He sprinted out toward the opposing teams, fastening his headguard around his chin as he ran. They were sending him in for Crawford! His big chance had come!

But Trask met him outside of the group kneeling around Crawford. "Take off your sweater and give it to Miller!" snapped the captain.

Then Harold, having a hard time to keep

the bitter tears of disappointment from rushing to his eyes, saw that Miller, the substitute tackle, had had three-quarters of his sweater torn off in the mêlée that had laid Crawford low. Harold, obeying without a word, peeled off his sweater and handed it to the half-clad player. Then he trotted slowly back to the bench.

They carried Crawford in on the stretcher that seemed to be working overtime for Tate that day.

"There's only ten minutes to go. I won't quit now. I tell you I won't!" Harold could hear the half-delirious, blanketed figure of the star quarterback half sobbing ten feet from the bench. "Mike, I can stay in. I can stand. Just give me a minute." But his mouth was twisted with pain and his ankle hung limply. Harold, relieving Trask of his part of the burden of carrying the quarterback, saw tears streaming down Crawford's dirty face. Cavendish gloomily ordered Mulligan to have his star transported down to the college infirmary.

Harold, resuming his seat on the bench, tried not to look conscious as Cavendish sadly surveyed the rest of his quarterback material. The rough Union Staters were making big inroads into the ranks of the Tate substitutes. Cavendish gave a quick glance at Hollister,

the third-string quarter. The latter's face was pale and tense. He was locking and unlocking his hands, crossing and uncrossing his legs. Sweat stood out on his pale forehead. Hollister was a Senior who had been trying for four years to make the Tate team. He was a good mechanical quarterback but lacked the spark that makes a good field general. Four years Hollister had worked for this moment. For his letter. And now moment and letter had come! And he was scared to death. He was so nervous that he could not have told one his own name if asked quickly.

Up in the Tate stand, Sheldon was saying gleefully to his chum, Garrity, "Look at 'Speedy' on the bench. He still thinks he has a chance to get in the game."

Cavendish stared at Hollister and the coach's heart sank. The lad was almost sick with fright. Could he trust this trembling funker out there running the Tate team? Well, what better could he do? He surely couldn't send in this fool Lamb, the joke of the squad.

"Hollister! Take Crawford's place," snapped Mike. "And, for the love of Mike, buck up, man. Your chance has come. Go out there and run those blue-bellies ragged!"

Hollister could hardly get his headguard over his head for trembling. But he reported

to the referee, a whistle blew, the new quarterback crouched behind Mershon and the game was on again. Hollister sent Trask against the Union State center and the captain made six yards. Blythe hit right tackle and lost three precious yards of Trask's gain. Trask hit the same spot and made them back again. Hollister started calling signals and Trask interrupted him. The captain ran over to his quarterback.

"The fool doesn't know enough to call for a punt," ranted Mike.

The signal was changed and Trask punted.

The old story of the first half was repeated. Tate was continually on the defensive. Back, back they were pushed. Three times they stopped the Union State advance within ten yards of a touchdown, thanks to demoniacal tackling by Trask, Blythe and Houghton, the Red and White backfield men. Union State did not once punt, confident that they could get their yardage by rushing. Tate, in possession of the ball, seemed sluggish on their feet. The linemen failed to open gaps. Trask and Blythe plunged into stone walls. Houghton, running the ends, saw his interference dumped and himself nailed by two and three Blue tacklers at once. Union State had it over Tate like a blanket and only luck and frenzied last-minute stands on the part of their oppo-

nents were preventing the visitors from running up a score.

"That dummy Hollister," lamented Cavendish, pacing like a caged tiger in front of the bench. "Why does he keep sending plays at the center? I told him to open up the play. Start his forward passing. He's hopeless."

Mike's ire at the Senior, who had been calling his signals in a small choking voice noticed even in the Tate stands and had as yet failed to inject himself into a single play offensive or defensive, mounted to red-hot heights at the beginning of the fourth quarter, when the unfortunate quarterback fumbled a punt and let a blue sweater recover the ball. Tate held again, and again Union State punted. A groan went up from the excited Tate stands as Hollister fumbled again. He was simply too nervous even to distinguish the ball clearly in the air.

A Union State player, unable to check himself even after the quarterback lost the ball, bumped into Hollister and knocked him down. For a moment the Senior lay prostrate. Harold Lamb at once jumped up from the bench and rushed over to Coach Cavendish. The coach would *have* to send him in now!

Harold pushed close to the coach and looked at him eager, expectantly.

Cavendish shoved him away impatiently.

"Why, we've just been kidding you. You're only the water boy," he snarled.

In his excitement Harold took little notice of this insult. He was looking out upon the field now and he saw Hollister assisted to his feet. The quarterback, apparently sound, trotted back to his position. Harold gloomily resumed his seat on the bench.

McCoy sent another arching punt into the air and Hollister, wabbling uncertainly under it, barely touched it with his finger tips. Tobey, coming like a whirlwind, brushed the quarterback aside as if he were a feather, and fell on the ball.

And this time, having received the huge knee of the giant Swanson squarely in his stomach, Hollister was obviously out for good. Cavendish watched anxiously. Trask raised the quarterback to his feet, but Hollister slumped down again. Trask looked expectantly over to the bench.

And then Harold could stand it no longer. He rushed wildly up to the gloomy Cavendish. The Freshman's eyes were strangely alight.

"You listen now!" cried the Freshman. "I wasn't kidding! I've been working—and fighting—just for this chance—and you've got to give it to me."

The referee came walking over from the

field toward Cavendish and added to the coach's dilemma by saying crisply, "You've had enough time out. Send in your substitute."

Harold renewed his attack. "Let me in!" he pleaded. "I can hold that ball. I can nail Tobey. I'll forward pass. I'll try the trick stuff. We can lick them yet! Let me in!"

The referee broke in again. "You have one minute to send in a substitute or else forfeit the game," he warned.

Cavendish looked around helplessly. Would he have to put the water boy in to run the team! He looked out on the field toward Trask. It was a cinch Trask wanted Lamb there. Well, there was nothing else to do!

He turned to Harold and bellowed, "Go in there then, you madman. And may the saints forgive me!"

Harold was off like a shot. He slapped the referee resoundingly on the back as the Union State quarterback was calling signals. The referee's whistle shrilled.

"Speedy" Lamb was in the game at last—fighting for Old Tate!

The Freshman turned to his teammates. He swept the battered and tired Tate line with fierce eyes. He yelled, "Come on, you old

women! Afraid of mussing your hair? Come on, fight! Fight!" He danced behind them, slapping the guards and tackles on the back. He bawled at the backfield men, "Come on, you half men! Snap into it! Smash these blue-bellies. Kill 'em!" His teammates looked at him sadly, indulgently. They were beginning to admit they were beaten. They had about given up.

Then Harold trotted back to the position back of the line just vacated by Hollister.

Houghton was playing to his right, also lurking for the forthcoming punt. But everybody knew the punt would never go to Houghton. Swanson would try out this thin, child-like-looking new quarterback, hoping to find him as butter-fingered as the last one. The ball spiraled back from the center. Swanson caught it. But, instead of punting, the big tackle attempted to double-cross his opponents by rushing around right end. He cleared the line of scrimmage and started for the open field. But Houghton and Harold, rushing over to stop him, tackled him at once. Swanson was cut down as if an avalanche had struck him. Harold landed under the husky Swede. Players of both teams flung themselves upon the heap.

Darkness closed abruptly around Harold. When it cleared again, he found himself be-

ing carried off the field on that fatal stretcher! He had been knocked clean out. But he was all right now. A little groggy, but all right. To the amazement of the stretcher-bearers, he jumped to the ground and ran back to his position.

On the next play the redoubtable Tobey dropped back. Tate expected the fleet halfback to try one of his famous sweeping end runs. But Union State was full of tricks. Tobey, faking a run, suddenly stopped behind the line and hurled a long, swift forward pass straight ahead of him to a State lineman running free and very swiftly. Unfortunately for State, the pass was a little high, and too swift to handle. The ball struck the State receiver in the head, bounded high in the air and landed in the arms of Harold Lamb, who, bewildered, was rushing about blindly.

Harold took the ball and ran with it. Tackled savagely and downed, he had the satisfaction of rising and hearing a Tate player exult, "Atta boy, 'Speedy'—a twenty-yard gain." And Tate had possession of the precious pigskin at last!

So excited was Harold that he started to stoop behind the Union State center instead of his own and big Mershon had to pull him back into his own territory. Cavendish, seeing this piece of dumbness, which seemed to

confirm his low opinion of the joke Freshman's ability, danced with rage and ended by putting his foot squarely in the water bucket and upsetting it.

Harold stooped behind Mershon and barked a signal. He had been a little afraid for his voice. Afraid it would divulge how nervous he really was underneath his bravado. But it came out strong and clear and gave him courage. He was slightly crazy, this fighting Freshman. But his head was clear. Having flung out his signal, Harold jumped aside. The ball was snapped back direct to Trask. The entire Tate backfield with the exception of Trask jumped across the line and tore down the field. But Union State was ready for them. Every Tate man was seemingly covered. Trask, eager to forward-pass, was foiled. As a tackler dived at him, Chester spotted Harold gyrating about wildly just over the line of scrimmage. The captain desperately hurled the ball toward the Freshman. More by good luck than good management, Harold saw it coming, raised his hands, juggled the ball, held it. Instantly Tobey tackled him fiercely. Harold struggled, loathe to believe he had been downed.

The referee blew his whistle and still "Speedy" tried to nudge himself forward, digging his cleats into the turf and pushing with

all his might. The referee blew again—more loudly. Still Harold paid no heed.

A red-faced and very angry referee came rushing up and seized the Freshman by the shoulder. The official jerked the ball out of Harold's hands.

With blazing eyes the referee cried angrily, "When you hear this whistle—put the ball down!"

A few more futile stabs at the Union State stonewall line and Harold, esteeming discretion for the moment the better part of valor, summoned Trask for a punt. The captain responded nobly by booming out a long sixty-yard spiral. Wing, State halfback, received it and was downed instantly.

The Union State supporters in the grandstand were shouting with joy and confidence. They had the ball back and the game was nearly over. Tate's rooters were wrapped in gloom.

State lined up. The weary Tate players crouched down to meet the onslaught of their opponents. Deciding to take no chances of fumbling so near his own goal line and knowing there were only a few minutes to play, the State quarterback summoned Swanson, the punter, back of the line.

"They may kick. I better play back—hey?" Harold yelled to Trask.

The captain nodded.

The ball was snapped back straight and true to Swanson. The Swede caught it, swung his big leg and crashed out a high booming punt.

At this providential moment a hawker, standing in an aisle in the Tate stands, let loose of his wares in his excitement. And his wares were toy balloons. They floated out upon the field high in the air. In the direct line of Swanson's punt. Harold, dancing under the ball, eyes in the air, suddenly saw six balls when there should have been but one. He blinked, faltered, lunged. The ball, eluding his eyes and his grasp completely, came swooping down and struck him squarely in the head. It bounded to one side and rolled along the ground. Harold, dazed for an instant, was after it like a shot. He scooped it up and tore down the field. Ahead of him was a clear passage! He had gone twenty yards when a whistle blew. It sounded like the referee's whistle—only many times louder. Through Harold's excited and bewildered consciousness flashed the memory of the referee's words, "When I blow this whistle, put the ball down!" and the memory of the official's red, angry face. Promptly Harold stopped his run and threw the ball disgustedly to the ground. He thought he probably

had run out of bounds or that some player had violated the rules, resulting in the stoppage of the play.

As he hurled the ball to the turf, half of the pursuing Tate and Union State players flung themselves at it. Trask, at the bottom of the heap, had the precious pigskin safely snuggled to his breast.

As Harold, knocked down in the rush, arose, the whole Tate team started raving at him. Chester Trask was hurling maledictions upon the Freshman's head. Then Harold realized his terrible mistake.

The whistle that had caused him to throw down the ball had not been blown by the referee! It had come from a locomotive drilling freight cars in the yards over beyond the stadium!

Harold flushed, lowered his head, longed to drop down through the ground. Then, recovering, he trotted back to the ball.

"It's all right, fellows. We'll get 'em yet!" he shouted as nonchalantly as possible.

"One minute left to play and you threw away our only chance!" Blythe, the Tate halfback, grumbled. Others were even more violent and outspoken against him.

Disregarding their hostility and eager to redeem himself, Harold crouched behind Mershon, the center, as the teams lined up

and thought swiftly. He had time for about one more play. And the Union State goal was forty yards away. Should he try the play Cavendish had sprung on them the last week of practice? The play the coach had said was a fifty-to-one shot, not to be tried unless everything else had failed? Well, the time looked ripe.

Harold yelled the next signal. He trotted back and lay prone on the ground. Chester Trask grimly stationed himself ten yards beyond his quarterback. The place-kick formation. A place-kick from the center of the field! It could be done, but the effort would have to be a mighty one. "Block that kick!" yelled the Union State stands. "Block that kick!" warned Captain McCoy.

The ball spiraled to the recumbent Lamb. He set its nose on the ground as the Union State line surged forward. But Trask's toe never hit that ball. Even as the captain swung toward it, Harold sprang to his feet with the ball and slipped like greased lightning around the right end. For an instant the Union Staters were outwitted. They tackled Trask. They looked in the air for the ball. Then they set out in full cry after Harold.

Blythe and Houghton were ranged beside him for interference. The former quickly sacrificed himself to take out a Union State

tackler. Harold flew over the white lines. He could see Houghton out of the corner of his eye. He could hear the pounding footsteps of the enemy coming ever closer behind him. Twenty, thirty yards he reeled off, and then the Union State quarterback was in front of him, waiting calculatingly.

"Left!" panted Houghton. And Harold swung obediently. The Union State quarter swung with them. He came at Harold head down, launched into the air. But he never met the man with the ball. Houghton dived in between and sent him sprawling.

Harold was alone in that last fateful twenty yards. He tried to increase his speed, but his legs would not work harder for him. As he crossed the last chalk-mark before the goal line he knew that he would be caught. Three steps further and Tobey, coming with the speed of a deer, dived at him. Harold was swooped down, struggled a foot or two, stopped and thrust the ball as far as possible ahead of him. Four or five Union Staters leaped upon his prostrate form at once.

Then the players of both teams seemed to be piling upon him under the shadow of the goal posts.

Mike Cavendish, who had passed through a lifetime in that mad twenty seconds, hid his red face in his gnarled hands and begged

a hoarse Hughie Mulligan, "Is the ball over? I can't look. I'm scared to death. Is it over the line?"

Hughie could not yet say for sure. And neither could the jubilant Tate stands. The referee plunged to the bottom of the heap, scattering Blue-clad and Red and White-clad warriors alike. He tore loose the desperately clinging Tobey. He lifted the exhausted Harold off the ball. He observed ball and last white line. Then he jumped to his feet and swung an arm aloft to the scoreboard.

The ball was over!

A wonderful "6" leaped beside the word "Tate" up there on the huge black scoreboard.

The Tate cheering section became a raving madhouse. Hughie Mulligan danced around Cavendish and hugged him. The Tate substitutes did a war dance. The Tate players on the field whirled, turned cartwheels and flung headgear into the air. Then concentrated on pounding the back of Harold Lamb.

The referee brought the ball out so that Tate could try for their extra point. The teams lined up, Tate joyous, Union State glum. But the goal was never kicked. As the ball was snapped back, the whistle shrilled.

The game was over!

CHAPTER XVIII

AND then the wildly jubilant Tate hordes, unleashed at last, swarmed out upon the cleat-torn field. The band was playing "Tate Forward March" crazily, blatantly. Hats and cushions and pennants filled the air. Off started the band and behind them zigzagged the yelling undergraduates in the time-honored snake dance. Old grads of fifty and sixty fell into line shouting and trying to emulate the mad rhythm. Non-collegian visitors, entering into the spirit of the occasion, piled down upon the field and cheered and stared.

Down the gridiron danced the Tate thousands. Under the goal posts where Harold had fallen with the ball they gryated. Hats flew into the air over, under, striking the crossbar. Many of them never to be recovered. But the owners didn't care. Up went the cheer leaders' red and white striped megaphones, to be caught on the other side.

Then victorious Tate lined up in front of the Union State stands, where the enemy stood stunned and wrapped in gloom. Tate generously cheered Union State. It could afford to be generous now. Union State made a gal-

lant attempt to return the compliment. Then the forces of Tate made a rush for the field house, where were sheltered their victorious warriors.

And Harold Lamb?

As the last whistle shrilled and the Tate rooters poured out, the first mad scramble was for him. Youthful arms seized him and he was lifted precariously aloft before he could protest. He was tired, grimy, smiling. He stooped down to try and shake all the hands that were pawing out to grab his. He caught a glimpse of his bearers. They were Dave Keay, "Shelley" Logan, Joe Bartlett and Leonard Trask. They grinned up and shouted things to him that could not be heard above the din. Even Dan Sheldon came rushing up and tried to shake hands.

Dan, shaken out of his selfishness and of his repugnance for the day's hero, yelled, "Atta boy, 'Speedy.' You put it over. You win, kid. I have to hand it to you." Harold reached and took the Sophomore's hand. He was at peace with the world that day.

Behind him, bobbing on shoulders that could hardly carry his sturdy frame, came Chester Trask, very nearly all in, but very happy. And then Blythe, Houghton and the rest of the team, even to the last substitute and including poor, still trembling Hollister.

All carried aloft by worshiping Tatians and borne to the field house. Tate would have grabbed Mike Cavendish too and carried him if they thought they had dared.

Harold, surveying all those mad thousands of people from his lofty perch, finally caught sight of the one face he was looking for—Peggy's. She waved madly to him and tried to make her way to him through the milling hordes. He waved frantically and yelled "Peggy!" He had an impulse to jump down and run to her. She disappeared into the throng. An instant later, flushed and happy, buffeted about by delirious Tatians, she managed to get near enough to him to reach up her arm and hand him the piece of paper clutched in her fingers. It was a note hastily scrawled on part of a page torn from a magazine. He reached down so far to take Peggy's note that he almost plunged off his supporters' shoulders into the crowd. He tried to attain her wrist, to hold her. But now there was a fresh onslaught by the sons of Tate upon their hero. Peggy was caught in the maelstrom, borne away out of sight.

Roaring Tate carried its football gods to the porch of the field house, and deposited them.

"Speech, 'Speedy,' speech!" went up a mighty shout.

"Speech, Captain Trask, speech!" echoed another.

But Harold escaped his admirers and ran into the field house. Chester Trask was left to face the crowd.

"Harold Lamb's not only one of the greatest football men Tate ever turned out, but one of the most modest," Trask's voice rang out. "From the start he had the proper spirit. And that's more than half the battle. He won this great victory single-handed. He carried the ball over himself. He ran the team like a veteran. Every play he used was strictly his own selection. Nobody told him what to do. And it was the first college football game he ever played in. I call that genius! We all regret that Bill Crawford was knocked out. But thank God we had Harold Lamb to take his place. And will have him for the next three years. Let's give him a long cheer!"

And Harold was cheered to the echo with the battle cry reserved for Tate captains only.

Then there were cries for Cavendish, but Mike had characteristically ducked. But Houghton spoke. Blythe spoke. And the others.

Inside the field house in the locker room Harold found it impossible either to change his clothes or to read the note Peggy had

handed him. Everybody wanted to congratulate the hero of the day. He was kept busy pumping hands and wincing under resounding blows on the back.

The manager of the team added to his congratulations the report that everybody outside the building, including Coach Cavendish, was now engaged in trying to learn the famous "Speedy" Lamb jig step and snappy remark to "step right up and call me 'Speedy.'"

"It'll be the rage of the campus," the hoarse-voiced manager declared. "You're the greatest hero Tate ever had, 'Speedy.'" This from a dignified Senior who had up to that day hardly known Harold's last name, let alone his first!

Coach Cavendish was now talking to his players. The tough face of Mike bore an unaccustomed smile. His voice was strangely mild.

"You're sure a lucky bunch of stiffs," he started. "You beat a team that was at least twice as good as you. They had you played off your feet. Till that crazy man Lamb went in." He turned as Harold slipped sheepishly back and drew a towel out of his locker. "Oh, there you are, you fighting fool. Forgive me if I ever again say I know a real football player when I see one! I thought you were the world's worst. You sure showed me up, kid. Put it there!"

Harold and the coach shook hands resoundingly.

"What's the use of calling it luck anyway?" grinned Mike. "We won, didn't we? When I saw 'Speedy' here open up the forward passing, I held my breath. When I heard him yell the signal for that trick place-kick, I shut my eyes and I didn't open them again till Hughie Mulligan said she was over. Then—oh, boy!!"

Reminiscences of the historic struggle were being hurled right and left. With Harold the center of it all. But quiet, eager to get away.

Harold knew where there was a solitary shower away from the other occupied row of swishing cascades. He slipped away and sought this haven. Leaning against the wall near the shower bath, he opened the crumpled piece of paper that was Peggy's note and read:

I knew you could do it. I'm so proud. I love you.
PEGGY.

Harold read the note five times, his face more and more suffused with smiles. Peggy! The sweetest girl in the world.

Suddenly a Niagara of water descended upon the blissful hero from the shower above. Absent-mindedly he had leaned against the

lever controlling the mechanism and given himself and his uniform an impromptu bath!

It was seven o'clock when Harold at last reached the Sayre home and walked into the hallway.

At once a soft bundle of fluffy-haired loveliness came running out from the living room and, hurling herself frankly into his arms, kissed him happily.

"Hail the conquering hero!" cried Peggy when she had disengaged herself. She stood off surveying him proudly.

Mrs. Sayre came to the living-room door and congratulated him more conventionally. Then Peggy drew him into the room. A short, stocky, gray-haired man was standing there, smiling broadly.

"Uncle Peter!" Harold cried. And rushed forward to shake hands.

"I got there just at the beginning of—what do you call it?—the last quarter," Peter Thatcher explained. "I saw you do the trick. It was great! Worth helping a boy to college for. I never thought I would like football. But say—I felt like kissing everybody in sight. I was as bad as the rest of the lunatics. Including this young lady." He turned to Peggy. Already he appreciated what she and his nephew meant to each other.

"But how did you find this house, Uncle Peter?" Harold asked.

"I got the address from the letters you wrote me," Mr. Thatcher explained. "And after the game I was spry enough to beat that wild mob to the last taxicab in sight."

"It's great to see you," said Harold.

"Now let's all go down to the Hotel Tate and celebrate with a big dinner," Uncle Peter proposed expansively. "You too, Mrs. Sayre."

The steel magnate went upstairs with Harold to the Freshman's room while Harold changed his clothes again.

"I want to say that to-day's happenings aren't all that have made me pleased with you lately, Harold," Uncle Peter said seriously. "For a while you had your mother and me worried. You got off on the wrong foot, I guess. Then, after that Frolic business, you seemed to pull yourself together. You had the right stuff in you all the time. You just needed something or somebody to bring it out. And I guess you found both. Football is the something and Peggy Sayre is the somebody, eh?"

Harold was blushing furiously.

At the Hotel Tate, Uncle Peter insisted upon ordering the most pretentious dinner that hostelry could serve them. They ate it

amid a roomful of celebrating Tatians. Every minute or so Harold had to respond to congratulations. He was eager to get away, to be out of this din, to be with Peggy.

And then at last they were alone together in the Sayre living room.

"You meant what you said in your note?" Harold asked her anxiously as she sat very close to him on the divan.

"Why, yes," she teased. "I *am* very proud of you—just as I said."

"I don't mean that part."

"But that was all I said, wasn't it?"

"No. You said—'I love you.' Oh, Peggy, did you mean it?"

She hesitated, then nodded a vigorous affirmative. And turned her red lips to his.

"Oh-h-h, Peggy," he cried and took her in his arms.

Five minutes later he was in a condition to try speech again.

"If I've done anything worth doing—I owe it to you, Peggy," he insisted seriously.

"Oh, be yourself, Harold," she laughed.

"That's what I mean," he persisted. "You said to me, 'Be yourself.' And that's what started me on the right track."

THE END

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